

Jill Raymond

There is an archive in Newbury.

Yep.

And that is sort of leftovers, because Evelyn - her house got turned over into it, and so she wanted to complete her side of the archiving, and then move the stuff on. And then two friends in London, um, ended up with them - Ippi, who I lived at camp with, um and she was one of the women who turned up when she was 15, and um, so but they've moved out of their flat in London - out of the country, so I said I can house them. But it was decided that they shouldn't go in the public domain because maybe, it's difficult, isn't it - with copywriting now. Um so...

And also your narrative - your story of Greenham was so, never belonged to you.

Yes.

Which is one of the reasons for us to do this with audio - it just wasn't your - it was always filtered through somebody else, interpreted through somebody else's voice or their pictures, or their view or something - there was always a slant put on to it, and it was very rarely, apart from - well Carry Greenham Home is you know I think is fantastic.

But it's very early.

But it's a snapshot, but you know if you think about - the girl yesterday at the school - she's 13, she said 'Oh, I know about Greenham', she said 'they broke into the base didn't they, and then they got arrested?', and I said 'Yeah, anything else?' She said 'No, I don't think so.' So you know, I said to her 'It was this huge thing', and then I showed her a clip - there's a clip on Youtube of Carry Greenham home, and with you all singing in front of the police, and them literally manhandling you in the most kind of brutal way, and all of the girls went '(Gasps) They can't do that!' And I said 'Oh yeah, they can.'

They did it for 10 years and more, and the bailiffs did it, and the police created a cordon so the bailiffs could do it, and they would drag women in their tents, and I mean a little while ago I re-saw Carry Greenham Home, and I was really shocked myself at how at um, at um, how brutal it was really.

That's really interesting.

Because you sort of, one of the, oh god - too many things to say! Too many things to say. One of the things about that big blockade - well there were just hundreds of women and one would get dragged and two more would lie down, was the way that we sang You Can't Kill the Spirit. Because it wasn't a bloody church choir thing, it was actually full of anger and power, and we were voicing our resistance, and it really helped us. Actually in any way singing helps our breathing because if you're frightened you stop breathing - I taught women's self defense for a few years, so it's important to keep those lungs going, but actually we didn't sing it like a three part harmony, it was, it was full of like 'you fuck off you bastards, you're not going to fucking kill my spirit!' And that's that's I find the way that it gets sung now is very sanitised, because it's not in context really, um, and I can't bring myself to sing that song. Because it's lost.

Yeah, it's a song that gets sung on the Million Women Rise march down in London, that I go on that every year, and again it's - I think what's lacking is the unity - so there's a little group of like six women singing it on the march, and then someone else will be singing it. It maybe extends, but actually it was - you sang as one voice, it was one voice in resistance, and whenever when I was putting that little presentation - that workshop together for them, it does bring tears to your eyes, it's really emotional, really emotional.

Yeah, so that film - one of my early things, when I was still weaving and living in South Devon, there was a very very active Totnes Women's Centre - it was three floors and um, we did a peace vigil every week on market day, and me and the woman I was living with at the time, who is going to be being interviewed - we went to loads and loads of CND groups all across the Westcountry showing that film, and it was being show all around the country local with different CND groups, and it was - it was a real frontline thing to do actually, because CND, you know they gave us endless amounts of support, but they it like, they were actually part of when the missiles left, even CND were putting out the women from Greenham had gone. We were completely de-noticed. We were having visitors from Japan and Australia and America and all across Europe come to visit us, we were still having journalists from all over the world, but everyone - the word was, in The Guardian, all of it was 'Oh they've gone home now, there's no more women there'. And that was a real, that's one of the things - I've got a list here of things I particularly want to be able to cover.

Brilliant, because I've got the conversation that i think you had with Becca..

On the phone, yeah.

And I thought actually I don't need to go to any of my questions, I can go through this conversation - it's absolutely loads of stuff.

Yeah, there is loads of stuff. I must be careful not to rant. But, er, I have got it here about like, I thought I had it here - the original - if you want to start taking photos, look, the original thing was...

Oh wow, look at that.

...Women will reclaim Greenham common. The missiles were almost a sideline, you know. The original march from Pembrokeshire was because the USA were moving back on. But the story was actually that was a USAFA base with a temporary fence around the common for the Second World War, and the USA had went home, but the fence had never come down. And our um, airforce stayed there. And then when the Trident thing came back up, and there were Tridents all over Europe, like, they um, they never - the fence was still there. So what we realised given, it was given a temporary permission to fence of the common, so actually it was about reclaiming the land and reclaiming the common, and that's why a lot of women stayed even though the missiles had gone home - because the fence was still there. And the first, you know the first really big actions were about pulling the fence down - you know, because we wanted to see the back of the fence, and we wanted to reclaim the common, so I fished this out. There were...

Oh great, you've got some fantastic stuff - how you've managed to keep all this in such great condition I don't know.

My friend's kept it, I mean I've - you know because I just had a damp old truck. But there were women's peace camps all over the world at that time.

Do you want to do - what do you want to do with the photographing and because I thinking maybe we want t sit down and talk, or do you want to do the photography, how do you wan to do this, Christine?

(Christine) I can photograph in here, but I can listen at the same time.

Right, because there are things that you particularly wanted to photograph, I'm guessing?

Well, there's things that I feel are - I can allow you to photograph.

Sure, understand.

And I haven't been through all of them, but I have put a few stickers in - what I felt.

It's like the Doom's Day Book or something, it's got a real feel.

Yeah, I feel - are you doing moving pictures as well?

No.

Well what I could do is just handle them and go oh yes, you know, um, but just get a picture of them all together, and certainly the covers.

(Christine) If you want to open it and talk about it so that's recorded, and then I'll take it away and photograph it?

Well I think I probably need to talk about my list of things I want to cover, but in terms of like - I was, you know, I can't allow you to take a picture of that, because I don't know who drew it, and there could be issues. You know, there was a lot of falling out. But it's ephemera, and I know for an archivist that it's very important. But there are some things that are very 'noncanil' (spelled phonetically) that you could photo.

But you'd have to say which ones they were.

Well I have put stickers on, on a few of them. But these are more, like this is more like, and there are diaries, there are lists, like there's a bleeding chart diary and you know, everyone filled in their thing on their moon day when we were bleeding, and because we sort of heard about this 'If you're in this together you all bleed together', so it was just an experimental thing.

And also I think it's quite good to know, because you can fall into that trap when someone's a bit grumpy of saying 'Oh are you,' but you can look at the chart, and rather than being patriarchal about it you can actually go and look at the chart and think 'Oh no it's not that, I am actually pissing them off', which is quite useful I think, personally.

Yeah. But the thing is we all ended up bleeding at the same time, so we were all pissed off at the same time! (Laughs).

Right, I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing!

But I feel like this bed spread is to patterned for you to picture them there.

Do you want to put some on the table out there.

Is that better, we can put them on that desk. We can put them over here a few at a time, because it is quite amazing they've survived so many evictions, but you see Evelyn had them - her house was full of this stuff, and um, you know the thing is she's getting older, everyone's getting to the point of we need to start making - we need to be leaving our...

Mark.

Our mark. We need to leave our inheritance and um...

Yeah, that's a good way of putting it 'inheritance', I like that.

I put that in because it's so resonant with today - 'One World Many Women' - that's Million Women Rise, you know - I did go to those a few times, but I just can't cope with such a big things any more.

Yeah, it is huge now.

It's a long way, I get cold. You know it's fantastic stuff - I just like that - it might not mean a lot to a lot of people, but it's er, look I put that in because we linked up, we were working with women you know, there was all this stuff about 'Oh, white middle class women', well do you know what I mean? I can understand why maybe black women wouldn't want to come and live at Greenham, because they'd be targeted and it's the same with Antifascist stuff, which I've been on some of, and it's so violent, but we were internationally linking with women in Namibia, the Western Shoshone people - there was a women's peace camp at Nevada test site, and the women's peace camp there was on Shoshone land, and the tests were being done on Indian reservation land, and the women's peace camp there had their own bit of land, because in America the arresting thing is so much harder. Women from Greenham went, you know, to the Nevada test site. We paid for women to come from the South Pacific Islands, um, to come and tour about the test - the sea testing - that was the women's peace camp at Comiso - there was a US air base - two women from Comiso came and lived at Greenham. There was a women's peace camp at Hiroshima. And right at the beginning of Greenham came and lived at Greenham, she died at Greenham of cancer.

Oh my god, didn't know that.

Hero, I think she was called.

So do you want to let Christine do some photography while we talk, or would you like to see what she's going to photograph just incase there's anything, because you'd only do the stuff with tabs on, wouldn't you?

Yeah, yeah.

It's up to you, Ray.

Some of it is like newspaper cuttings, so it's in the public domain. How have I got that one on there? Oh this lot are actually about the fact we didn't leave when the missiles did. This diary is, I think it does help to have a little bit of why I've done this, but this is an article about the missiles have gone, but we're still here, and we did get a lot of being slagged off about why we didn't go, and it became a lot of work to do that. And also the donations stopped coming in, you know, and a lot of women - some of us signed on in Newbury, or did postal signing on, but a lot of women for various reasons wouldn't be able to sign on - especially if they were under age or escaping domestic violence. Um, and so we had camp dole - when we had lots of donations, which were coming from all over the world, um, we were able to actually support women financially with what we called camp dole, so they had a bit of personal money, and um...

That's really interesting as well I think, because what I've read of when the men were there at the beginning, that when they would get the money that they would keep hold of it. And seems to be like, if you look at the World Health Organisation and the way you know the organisations work in a global way - African or Somali, whatever, when they're trying to work with, you know, developing countries, they like to give the women the money because they know they will spread it around. So that's quite interesting.

Yes. But the men were only there for a week or two, I mean there was a call out on the telephone tree - I was back in Devon, and there was a call out for as many women as possible to get up for that - there was going to be a big meeting and a discussion and a decision to get rid of the men. So I rushed up to be there to vote that we got rid - because there was no intention to stay, in the first place, and at that time you know there were a lot of New Age Travelers about and some of them, well we called them the brew crew, and we just didn't want them, you know, they're fucking piss-heads, and um, and so yeah there was, when the decision was to stay, there had to be a decision to ask them to go, and some heterosexual women left Greenham at that point, because they said 'The lesbians can live here with their lovers but we can't, so we're not going to stay.' Well that's fine, that's their choice. But you know even that - it wasn't exactly controversial, but it was a deciding factor for some women. Um, but it was a deciding factor for a lot of others who thought 'Right, now we've got a women

only space here', you know but also it was because of the violence - you might have been told this, but to do blockades, um, totally non-violently, it's much easier to do it as women only. In those days - partly because the police were possibly going to be less violent if it was women only, we've just talked about Carry Greenham Home - they weren't exactly non-violent, but if there'd been men it would have probably been a lot worse. Because it would have ended up with a big fight, which was sometimes what happened with traveler sites being evicted, you know - there'd be a huge stand off, like Dale Farm is amore contemporary example, but a lot of people got injured really badly from resisting that eviction. And um, but um, anyway, er these were three things that I thought you really must get a photo of, because, and again you might get them anyway from somewhere else. Where is the orange one gone where is said about Reclaim the Base? Oh god.

Think it might be underneath.

Think it might be underneath. Because I felt that was one of the really important things to say - we were actually there to reclaim the common as much as to see... you could take those as a shot with some diaries in the background, couldn't you? (Noise of moving papers around).

So did everyone write in these diaries, Ray?

No, no, it was voluntary.

It was just whoever wanted to write something could write something?

Yes. A lot of visitors would write, because they'd give us their address and say 'If you're in Sweden, do drop in - there's always a bed for...'. There was a lot of coming and going between the women's squats in Brixton as well. There was a brief occupation in London, a lot of Greenham women went to, of the London Women's hospital - that was squatted for a while. It had water! For fuck's sake, we were living at camp you know, it was quite nice to go up there for a few days and have some water! Yeah, all the diaries had got names.

What do you mean they'd got names?

Well look, Ermintrude or Daisy or like Parsley, some of them have got names like, you know - this is the friend that's done - Load Gate, it was actually Woad Gate, but it got called Load Gate. So um just sort of nicknames or whatever came up, whoever was around. But there's a lot of stuff from visitors that write and say 'God, you know, I never knew I was going to be here, and I'm definitely coming back', and they would and they would come back, and, or they would just 'I'm not going home, I'm staying'

So where's my list? Right, I've done this list is slightly chronological, so yeah the vote to ask men to leave, so there was a call put on the telephone tree, because I was already in a women's peace camp in Totnes, a women's peace group.

And was that to men and women, or just to women?

It was only to Greenham, to the women.

Right. And so how, what would that have looked like on the day - the women would have arrived, did you have a big tent that you all sat around?

Oh no, we sat, we were just outside.... so in amongst all that in amongst early discussions about what non-violence actually meant and the reason, because I was at the silos action - the New Year's silos action, I was in a ditch with ladders, there was quite a lot of support - not just the forty on the top, and we used ladders because we felt that cutting the fence was violence.

Right.

So obviously that got reviewed, but just in those early days we thought 'Oh, we cut the fence, they'll say we're being violent, we're not being non-violent', so that's why we used ladders.

Right, yeah.

And then...

And you had cushions over the barbed wire, or something, didn't you? You had..

Bits of carpet and stuff.

That's it, yeah.

So that was initially, um, that was initially why we used ladders.

So when you- to go back to the women only vote, when it was put to the vote, was it just a question and a raise of hands for, to see...

I can't remember. There was a bit of discussion, but I mean you know, there weren't - men continued to be involved in Greenham, they just didn't live there, and one of the rules was like men can come until dark. But there were, like Emerald Gate was basically no men because it was up in the woods, and we needed a place where we

could go, like Blue Gate was very much on the frontline, you were right on the roadside, on the junction, and by the racecourse - it was near the racecourse, near Newbury racecourse, so there was a lot of traffic, and it was the first stop coming up out of Newbury - although Yellow was on a more main road, um, so yeah, so I think the call out was for women that were already in women's peace groups. I was in a little anti-nuclear group before I lived in South Devon I was in West Somerset, and Hinckley Point was being developed, so initially I was involved in a local group which was against nuclear power. So when Greenham started up, there was immediately that nuclear chain link of nuclear power as being promoted because they need the, it ends up with weapons grade plutonium, isn't it, to go into the missiles. Um...

So what was the reaction when the vote was taken and it was decided it would be women only? What was the immediate reaction?

I can't really remember, I suppose we were all very glad, because it was very tied up with the decision to stay, which had never even been the plan - it was very much tied up that, going 'Okay, some of us want to stay, some of us are not going to go home, some of us are going to be half the week, or whatever, but to enable us to do that and to feel safe and comfortable, we therefore need to ask the men to not, to go and park up somewhere else'. Because they didn't do the washing up - to me it wasn't, the money would have been one thing, but at that point we weren't doing camp dole, this was really early days, and so it was, um, yeah, it was quite tied up with like 'If we're going to stay here, and we really want to be non-violent, how can we do it? We can't do it with the men around because they get drunk, they are violent and they won't do the washing up, they expect us to cook for them.' There were all those domestic reasons really, you know. And then so, anyway. Right, so yeah I got evictions which led to us having to have night watch as well, because of the vigilantes.

Were these local residents?

Yeah, well some of them were out of uniform squaddies as well, but in the diaries there are endless reports of 'Oh, some, you know, 'viggies' came by in the night and they set fire to the sofa, 'viggies' came by in the night and all the tents and vehicles are covered in eggs.' 'Viggies..' just endless. We had to go to the shit pit in the woods in twos because there'd be perverts hanging around the shit pit, it was um, it was a real issue. And cars would rive by and chuck stuff out, you know - morning, noon and night - and there's lists of number plates in those diaries - 'Oh, white so-and-so car, think this is most of the numberplate'. Also people hitched a lot more in those days, so women would be coming up and down the motorways and you sort of like, 'oh, so-and-so got a lift from Membury Service Station got a lift from this geezer who was really weird, here's his number - he's up and down here all the time', and because we had the publicity, men knew where we were as well. So Yellow Gate was

on a lorry road down to Southampton, Blue Gate was a more sort of B-road, but the thing is at first there was only Yellow Gate - Main Gate, um, and then we gradually would have open other gates temporary for big actions, like Orange Gate and Blue Gate and Green Gate, because Green Gate was right opposite the silos, so we watched the silos being built, and a lot of vehicles were coming in and out of there - delivering the stuff to build the silos. Um, and then you probably know that Yoko Ono bought us the sanctuary, and then there was the whole business with the split and wages for housework and I remember that meeting as well, and it was a huge gathering, and that was in what was then the clearing at Green Gate - it's all been re-planted and everything now, it's not a learning any more. But they had equipment that was out of this world - great big recording things with great big stalks with booms on, and it was very intimidating, and we just thought 'Where do they get this stuff from?' And also at that, for a long time, and I think this continues, there were a lot of feminist conferences around the country and the women from Greenham were being invited all the time to go and do workshops and to speak about Greenham and so, you know, we'd pile up in a van and six of us would go to the Midlands or wherever, and go to these conferences to do stuff about what's happening at camp, and collect money, and then, um you'd go to these things and there'd be women from Kings Cross Women's Centre and there would be one of them in every workshop - whatever the topic was, there'd be one of them in every workshop going 'You should be talking about wages for housework!' 'Yes, but this workshop is about abortion rights.' 'Ah, but what about wages for housework?' And it was very disruptive, and it's a bit like what's happening now with the Trans activist lobby, um, to me it's very similar tactics, and we always - ultimately we felt like this CIA backed thing.

Right. I was going to say why do you think they did that? So you think they were paid to just create disruptive...

They were funded. That women's centre still exists, one of the few women's centres that still exists. It's pro-pornography, it's got what's it called - English Collective of Prostitutes, and meanwhile we were being told that the women at Greenham were being funded by the Russians. You know, so we weren't! (Laughs.). Anyway, I'm digressing a bit there.

So can I ask you a couple of questions about what you've said? So the, you were talking about the vigilantes and it being fairly constant, and although you, in sort of criminal justice terms it might be pretty low-level, actually the constant nature of it must have had an impact on the women and their feelings of physical safety?

Yeah, well, like if you wanted to go to the shit pit, you'd have to go with you. And if it's dole day and there's only three of you there, that's quite hard, because one of you has got to stay at the camp, at the gate, you know. Yeah.

Did you ever report any of this activity to the police?

Oh, I wouldn't...I don't know, some of them might have got reported, but the police weren't on our side, they weren't there to defend us. But also I think we have to remember it's actually not unusual for women to have to be coping with male violence most days of their life. You know, as well and especially women that are there escaping domestic violence, not necessarily from a marital partner, but from parents - young women were escaping abuse in the home, it wasn't anything new. But we weren't on our own, and yeah, so we you know, developed tactics of self defense.

And what was the night watch just to keep the tents and the surroundings safe so that things wouldn't get burnt?

Yeah, but also to a certain extent monitoring activity inside the base, because you know they still do it now - there's still a Cruise Watch, and periodically they'd come out and do their tour on the road and block off all the motorways, and I think they often come out at night because the roads were quieter, so there's, you know, whole lists of activity in the base, especially when the Americans started to arrive. Once the silos were built, and you know - there's a lot of documentation about the missiles arriving because obviously the press were all over it then, they were all over us, obviously they were inside the base.

What did they want from you do you think - the press? They just wanted a story or how did...

We had to be very careful with the press. Mostly they wanted a story, but you know, all press you've got to be very careful about what you say, because you know they'll misquote you and they won't put the bits that you think are important. Nobody wanted to talk to the press, and we did it on our own - we'd always try and not - 'All the starts are in the sky, we don't have leaders here', and they'd come up and they'd go - three men would come with cameras and all this equipment, and they'd go 'Oh, can we speak to - who's in charge around here? Can we speak to the leader?' 'Oh, no, we don't have leaders, and anyway you're a man and we don't speak to men. Go away. When you send a woman to come and interview us, if you're lucky you'll get an interview', you know. I mean there was that level of resistance of like 'Yes, it's a women only space!' And that was a hard thing for a lot of women to come to terms with, to get the hang on, but it soon makes sense because that's what you know, at that time there weren't many women journalists, there weren't many women photographers, we give a woman a job, you know.

So did women journalists start coming?

Yeah.

Right, right. So again, when I watched I think it's Carry Greenham Home, there's an excerpt with exactly that - this, like a sound guy and then some other guy...

(Laughs)

And he's so patronising, oh my god he's so patronising, just horrible! What a horrible man! And he gets short shrift.

Well there we are, there's your evidence, I mean I feel like am I imagining this, but no it is what happened. So right...

So tell me about Yoko Ono as well, just so we can..

Verify it...

Just so we have you talking about it.

Well she brought, on the outside of the gate if you go up the road, um at Green Gate, if you turned left, the camp was on the left hand side and if you turned right, into the woods, there was a bit of land that must have come up for sale, and she bought it for us as a sanctuary - it was our sanctuary. You couldn't see it from the road. If you walked around the fence you could probably see it a bit. It was where, if women were ill, or just needed some headspace it was our headspace. And then when it got sort of occupied by Katrina Howse and the Yellow Gate, further along down the road, we lost our sanctuary, so the other side of Green Gate camp became more of a sanctuary, and for a while Green Gate camp was like no caffeine, no sugar, no alcohol, no drugs, it was like a sort of pure gate (laughs). I mean a lot of the donations were bottles of vodka and bottles of brandy and you know, and it was great - it would really help. And then, also when it was very intense with having night watch and the evictions, there as a whole sort of rota of um, different support groups that would bring hot food. Because it was impossible to cook. At the end of the day they would - the fire service would come and they would absolutely soak our fire pits. We had no dry wood - it was not possible, they'd take all our kitchen pots and um, so there was like a very, very good support network of once it got dark, well because I was there mostly in the winters, the hot food runs would come and they would bring in the backs of the cars and the vans in straw boxes, pots of stew and stuff to feed us, because we couldn't cook. So that was a really important part of the support, and that was like a lot of CND groups did that - Oxford and Southampton and...

I mean it sounds almost like torture. Like a kind of you know, like a state, how you would treat people if they were in a prison camp.

Yeah.

You want to break them.

Yes, yes, absolutely.

Did you ever think 'I can't do this anymore?'

Yeah, yeah, everyone would think that at times and go off but you know, um, yeah and some, you know we had whatever, yeah, but that's why over a period of 12 years - a lot of women left when the missiles left, and they might have carried on. Like that thing with the London Greenham newsletters is actually saying 'Hardly any of us go to Greenham anymore, we're not really raising refunds anymore' - they used to do benefits and send money and stuff, and um 'If we don't get some more material it's probably time to stop doing the newsletter'. So, but that's healthy - you know things can't be set in aspect, they need to be responsive to the circumstances of the time, so yeah - you were saying earlier about the consciousness raising, I think a lot of that was done on the night watch.

Yeah, I think that's really missing from feminism today. I think those spaces always seem very useful, even though they might be completely unstructured, they're very useful.

Yeah, because I was in a CR group for a while in Somerset, before I moved down to Devon, and we did have a structure. Because we started off with very safe things to talk about, or felt like they might be safe - turned out to not be safe, like food! (Laughs). It's actually a Pandora's box for women - the whole issue of food and cooking and eating, and weight and size, and kids, and a childhood - like when I was born there was rationing. So my respect, my relationship with food is very different to people's relationships now, particularly. So. Er, yeah, so also like the whole father daughter rape, sex abuse, not only from the church, but we started to understand 'Oh, I had a very young sister', and then we realised it was actually like, er, young women who got pregnant from their fathers, the mother would pretend it was her baby. So you thought you had a sister - yeah I'm getting a bit mixed up, but you know what I mean, and we talked about that and when you're grown up, or someone dies or something, you start to find out - if you start to unpick that and really examine the family story, and it was quite consciousness raising to realise you weren't the only one. And the same with, particularly, the Irish women that would come over with what was

happening with the church in the schools - now it's all over the place, but we were going 'We told you so, we told you so!' (Laughs). Nobody would listen, like the classic Cassandra.

And who was told? Who did they try and tell?

I don't know, because I wasn't part of that, but I know from a particular, this Irish friend who was sort of hounded out of the country, who had to leave her kids behind, she moved to London but she used to come to Greenham a lot, and Aldermaston, and she got involved in psychotherapy, working with Gay Helpline and um, started to do the counselling...

Trauma work?

Yeah, the trauma work, so Irish men and women were, in the end part of the investigations, I'm not up to speed with it really, but it took a long time, because we were having these conversations and nobody would listen. So I wanted to talk about web weaving - has that been covered?

No.

Okay, because it's on the Comiso sticker - it's on a lot of the posters, um, and I went to the Women's Pentagon Action - the second action, there was two women from Greenham went to that. I mean I went as a woman artist, because there was a huge feminist arts movement in New York, and I'd been at art college and my best friend at art college, she was back in, she was from New York, so I went to stay with her in Manhattan, and I got involved in the Women's Pentagon action, and the New York Feminist Art institute. And so I ended up going to that. We were doing it a bit at camp anyway, but Arachne - the thirteenth sign that was being erased by neo-astrologers, and also Bohemia Grove in Texas - it was a men only place where the politicians and the businessmen would for their weekend hunting shoot - wheeling and dealing, and one of their sayings was 'We have no spiders here'. There was something about spiders went on with that. But basically the Women's Pentagon action was in four or five stages, oh I haven't really done my homework on this, but we started off with gathering - we'd slept overnight in a big stadium in Washington DC, and we'd all made tomb, cardboard tomb things with the name of a woman that was killed by patriarchy. It might just have been a friend, it might have been someone historical, so we had loads of these cardboard tombstones. So the first thing we did, we did a linking hands on the bridge that went from in the rush hour - in the morning, because we did a lot of this in and around the country here as well, er, so did the hand holding thing with our tombstones on the way to the island that the Pentagon is on, on the Potomac river, and that as, and then we asked through - maybe it was before

or after, but there's a huge military cemetery next to it, and we walked in silence though that to remember the war dead, actually our brothers, and um, and then but we had our own, remembering our own dead, and then we got the grounds of the Pentagon and we planted these tombstones in the grass, and that was anger, empowerment and defiance was three of them. So after doing that, and we walked through the cemetery in silence, and as we emerged we wailed and keened and howled, and then we planted our tombstones on the grounds of the Pentagon, and then there was the defiance bit, which was blockading the - one of them's a water gate, so there was only four gates we could get to - I don't think we did - there wasn't water action. But how we blockaded the gates, and the American women wouldn't let you do this, because they said you're too vulnerable - if you get arrested your life will be a misery, we will do the blockading, but how they blockaded it was with webs. So you've got very wide steps, um, with some handrails, and women lay and sat on the steps - I have got, somewhere some photos of this, because I met up - at the Feminist Art Institute with a photographer, who, Michelle somebody....so they were flinging these balls of wool at low level, so actually it became impossible to climb up the stairs, because you'd get tangled. So it was totally non-violent and we blockaded the gates of the Pentagon to do that in that way, so weaving the wider web, the whole Greenham women are everywhere, Arachne - the lost thirteenth sign, and so yeah, Women's Pentagon Action.

And I noticed in Carry Greenham Home there's lots of balls of wool, and they throw them behind them, they hold onto the end of them and throw them behind, and as the police are trying to get through, they're having to step over the sort of...

Yes. And if you use nylon wool it's a lot harder to break as well.

Which is an incredibly effective and...

It's very womanly. The knitting and the crocheting and the weaving - we are the weavers, we are the web, we are the flow, we are the ebb. It was an absolutely crucial symbolic thing. The strength of that tiny thin little thing, you know, it's hard to break. So when we had very big actions hundreds of women would be arrested, maybe not charged, but ten there was, because a lot of the support action after that was going to Newbury magistrate's court, being outside, weaving, and we wove webs outside and, if we could get in, inside the court as well, and so when it got to be such large numbers of arrests they started doing the hearings at magistrates courts in the parts of the country where women came from. So like I went to stuff at Totnes magistrates court, and we would - only half a dozen of us, maybe, we'd go in, try and look respectable, sit in the magistrate's court, couple of women would be up there from the Totnes women's peace group, for being arrested, and then we would start, whip out our balls of wool and we would completely web up the magistrate's court. And

the clerks would just like, don't know what to do. I mean sort of like throwing these balls of wool across the public gallery, which was only a small court, and then, you know, and then, oh yeah, it was a really fantastic linking, symbolic thing to do this web weaving.

And it's quite shocking, because it's so, er non-compliant, it's so I expected and also non-violent. It's absolute genius, I think.

Yeah, and you know it follows on - do you remember, I don't know how many, maybe 10 years ago or less, there was a pink scarf knitting thing that went from Greenham to Aldermaston, so it carries on with that wooly, knitted, womanly craft of it. And um, so sometime, er, 1996 there was the criminal justice act, and I was on a traveler site in Manchester at that time, in Hulme - it was all being pulled down, and I was involved in the Freedom Network, which was against criminal justice act, and um, the first night, the first midnight when the crucial justice act came in, the first action against that was in Manchester. And some people did a banner drop or something, and they got arrested, so they were up in court in Manchester, and as part of the Freedom Network from there, I took the wool, and we wove up the front of the, not to blockade it, but there's a pedestrian area with seats and pillars and stuff, and it was just very interesting, because nobody had ever seen this done. It was a mixed group, and obviously younger than me, mostly, but activists, but we did the web weaving there, and it was very novel for them. Right, web weaving, and the court cases.

Presumably you got arrested at various points?

Yeah, I did, but they put you in the van, throw you out, I never got charged. You get arrested, they hold you, and then you may or may not get charged. So I never was charged, I'd just be bundled up and thrown out. Or they bundle you up and throw you out on the opposite side of the base in the middle of the night, and you'd have to get home somehow.

So one of the women I interviewed told me she had a 4 year old daughter, and her daughter was arrested for - were you aware of anything like that?

No.

I think it was sort of part of that punishment for mothers to be, you know, not to be performing their ...

Good mother?

Yeah...their duty, was that anything that you were aware of?

No. No, I mean it was Sarah Green, wasn't it - who had the baby, um, because Becca sent us an email from Sarah Green about something.

thats right.

Yeah, she had the baby there. I mean I wasn't full time there at that point, and what happened was, because I was still weaving - I was doing my own work, and I started to go one week a month. So I hitched up with another woman from Exeter, with the women's peace group, or maybe I was working at Exeter Women's Centre then part-time, and one week a month I would go up, and that was as much, and we would hitch up together, stay at different gates, and then hitch back together, so that we could compare notes and talk about the different experiences and interviews. Information - to, so yeah, anyway, Greenham women are everywhere, because that was again a non-hierarchical thing. It wasn't like 'Oh you're not a real Greenham woman because you don't live here.' You know, no there was, and also there was - I will go onto the other peace camps because I mentioned um, Seneca and the Nevada test site, I mentioned Comiso in Sicily - I mean imagine being a women's peace camp in Sicily of all places. Um, Hiroshima, for a while there was a women's peace camp at Portland Down - that was a vegan camp.

Right.

Um there's South Pacific Nuclear test sites, we worked particularly with a woman called Sol who would come and live at Blue Gate quite a bit and would go back and forth, back and forth, and then there was Menwith Hill of-course, you must know about Menwith Hill. That was a women's peace camp, and that partly came out of - there were a lot of Greenham offshoots, and one of them was Women on the Road for Peace tours - I think there were three or four years of them. One year included - there was some sea action groups - Southampton, I wasn't involved with them, but I've been reminded by reading the diaries, but there was sea actions as well, but the Women on the Road for Peace tour was just going like from - there was different tours, but I went on one of them, I did the second half of one of them when we went up into Scotland. So that was er, quite a good offshoot, obviously we'd meet up with Women in Black. You know about Women in Black - you got any records of...

No, tell me.

Well Women in Black was actually started in um between Palestinian and Israeli women, and er, as a peace movement, and they sort of - one of the themes of their public - it still happens once a week in London now - Women in Black demonstrations - there's silent vigils, and they wear, only wear black, I've been - I used to go to the

ones in Southampton. They're still happening in London. It's a fairly international, um, movement there's Women in Black in America. I don't know if they're in Palestine and Israel quite possibly, the one in London is still going. It overlapped a bit with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and so yeah. Another offshoot..

So it's a huge network, really?

It was a massive, massive network. So, have you - there's another Greenham offshoot, and it's a separate project in its own right, but Women's Aid for Former Yugoslavia was a huge Greenham network, um, outreach thing with um, during the war in former Yugoslavia. We were already connected to Women in Black in Serbia, and Croatia, Zagreb and Belgrade. So we worked with them and um, there's a difference between displaced people and refugees in terms of who gets aid from the UN. So if you're a displaced person you don't qualify for aid so we particular worked through our sister organisations to support women, women and children who were not getting UN aid. So we supported a lot of things. Jo Brand was a fantastic campaigner for us. But we worked with the W.I., we worked with the Girl Guides, we had different campaigns. We did really like dozens of, dozens of convoys, and I went three times. I've got a few photos up there of trips. So we hired trucks, and um, we took requested aid - you know, and we would, like there was um, a Muslim and Christian women worked together in a town in Krajina, which was a very contested area. And they'd salvaged out a bombed building to make a day centre for women, and it had um, they got a washing machine - because it was very hard to get the washing down, so we supported them with soap powders, so we'd always collect soap powder to take to that. And then through also another project that came out of it was the Sock Project, so women who were in refugee camps, we'd take wool - another knitting thing - we'd take wool to them and they would knit their traditional socks, and we'd bring the socks back and sell them through independent bookshops to help raise funds. It was, it's therapeutic knitting - isn't it? Even on a good day.

And also creating something that you know, it's not charitable giving - it's an exchange. You've given them something you get something in exchange.

Yeah. So every week in um, in er, Zagreb the Women in Black were doing a silent - I've got a few photos of that but I haven't fished them out because it's a slightly separate thing, but we joined them to do those, and they were doing this every week through the war. And you know, you get back absolutely exhausted, and people go 'Oh god, it must have been really scary, it must have been really depressing seeing..' and you go 'Actually it really wasn't', because all our links were with amazing women that were doing, resisting so much and supporting so much that it was very inspiring to go. It was exhausting, but, and there as a slight overlap with the Women's Peace

Movement with the Underground Railroad that was supporting um, conscientious objectors to get out of the country because they didn't want to be conscripted, so there was a little bit of overlap with the men who were trying to leave because they were war resisters and War Resisters International still goes.

So why do you think there is so little um, kind of celebration of Greenham and all because once you start looking into it - as you say - the connections and the influence and the impact is enormous. So the Suffragettes are really celebrated whereas Greenham isn't so much. Why do you think that is?

Oh, we've probably, we've probably it's not far enough in the past! (Laughs). Maybe when it's 100 years and we're all dead there'll be some sort of misrepresentation made - which is why it's really good that you're doing this. Um, you know there's so much more out there now, isn't there? And I don't know, I feel like there is quite a lot of - Greenham was quite well documented, all the newspapers that might have some quite twisted reports, but there's a lot of evidence. As you say, it might not be our words, but um, yeah. I don't know. I mean peace became very like not fashionable, and CND was being poo-pooed and um, and all that, and now people think nuclear power - I mean even George Monbiot - I think he's changed his mind, but thinks nuclear power is a good clean solution, and also I've been to speak where people are talking about nuclear power, and they don't even think about the connection with nuclear weapons. And yeah, there's and there's I don't know. I can't say anything more about that.

So in terms of the collective nature of the camp, there must have been conflicts and - some of the women I've met have been quite strong characters - so how would that have been managed in terms of making decisions and sorting it conflicts and so on?

Well, meetings. You know, there'd be a lot of meetings. There'd be a money meeting, there'd be a newsletter meeting, um, and when there were several camps, actually one of the ads of dealing with conflict is like 'Okay, this is going to be a caffeine free, sugar free, no alcohol, no drugs camp, so if you don't want to be around women enjoying the donations of the bottles of vodka at Christmas, you can go - you don't have to be here, you know'. So there was partly that, like Blue Gate was a vegan gate, um, but that could be very unhealthy - you know, chips and beans. So there as different ways around it, so if you wanted to eat meat, there was other gates you could go to to eat meat. So that was part of it - there was quite a lot of freedom of choice because we created that. But I wasn't always at Blue Gate and also at one point, you see at Blue Gate we had to keep moving at Blue Gate, because they fenced a load of it off and said they were going to do a nature conservation area, and they fenced it off with this little picket fence and planted trees, so we had to move out. So they'd, we went on the other side of the road, and also it got that you couldn't

really put benders in the wood because the evictions and the 'viggies', so then we had - there's pictures of it in there, but it was the railings, and it was an old house, it was derelict I think, and, but the railings had hooks on, and we'd just have a huge long sheet of plastic and we all slept under there together ready for the, you know, 8 o'clock evictions. And then the Mormons got a planning permission and built a Mormon church there, so the railings went, so then we couldn't be there, so then we moved the other side of the road - the B road - on a bit of green land that - I don't think it was part of the common, because there was endless amounts of looking at maps and planning and what was military and what was common and all this. So then we had to move across that side. And then they painted yellow lines, so then we couldn't park vehicles. So then I couldn't put my truck there anymore, so then I started going to Orange Gate because there was room to park a truck. So, and then I had a lover who also had a truck, so there was more room for both of us to be at Orange Gate. And then they put these mounds in, also there were quite a lot of traditional traveler sites, and people coming and going, and um, so the local sort of Irish traveler boys - young men, would sort of turn up around the fire and they'd go 'Oh, what do you all do when you get randy, then?'

(Laughs)

'Go away, young man!'

Because that's the most important question!

Yeah, yeah! It's like 'Oh we're always available if you feel the need! (Laughs). So, yeah, so I came and went a bit, and at another point I had a girlfriend who lived in Southampton and when we did the big sort of Embrace the Base things, like in London, if you were from the south you went to Orange Gate, because that was the side of the 9 mile fence. If up were from the west country you went to Emerald Gate because that was that side. If you were from London we did Violet Gate and Blue Gate, so it was just partly a matter of geography and parking. But then they came and painted these yellow lines so we couldn't park anything there. In the end we painted the yellow lines out, and to be honest, I've done that on the road as well - I worked in Bristol for a while and I came back one weekend - a Sunday night and the bloody yellow lines were there, and I just painted them out - I've got to get to work in the morning, you know. Blackboard paint is very good because it dries very quick. So er, yeah.

So what was the, your relationship like, because there are various - there are the MOD police, there's the Newbury police, there was the police that came in for the big demonstrations, and then there were the residents and so on of Newbury, what were the relationships like with those?

Really bad. I mean Thames Valley Police, it's actually amongst the travelers as well TVP were very, very known, because it Thames Valley included Stonehenge, and there was that huge Battle of the Beanfield thing in '85/'86, so Thames Valley Police, they really - there was no relationship, it was hostile. They, with the, at one point because there was a full time team of fence menders for quite a while, because every night there'd be so many holes made in the fence - women were in and out all the time, er, and what also what we did was we'd make our holes and then stitch them back together with a bit of wire, and the fence menders would tour the perimeter of the fence, they wouldn't see it, but we knew it was there. So they ended up having to employ a full time team of fence menders, and then at one period they had a full time team of bailiffs, so they literally - five days a week - they would just touring the perimeter, so it was pot luck who got the first eviction, because it was random. So they were employing a full time team of bailiffs, and what I heard after camp closed, actually was, they were vicious, you saw how in Carry Greenham Home they're really vicious - they wear dark glasses. There's one in Carry Greenham Home with the shiny dark glasses, a big chap - I can't remember all the names - the names are written down in the diaries. Do you remember in Hungerford - just the other side of Newbury one of the first shootings of school kids was at Hungerford, and it turned out that that guy was one of our bailiffs.

Oh wow.

So that's the level of psycho - absolutely violent, psychotic men. Um...

Frightening.

Yeah. Really frightening. You probably know that a woman at Yellow Gate was run over and killed.

Yeah. How did that happen?

I don't know because it's a Yellow Gate thing, but it's noted in there. It's noted that we - someone from Yellow Gate...

Because nothing ever happened about that, did it - nobody ever got prosecuted or arrested or anything for that. And somebody else got their leg broken, didn't they?

Yeah, there was, probably. There was, you know we had some women at Blue Gate, certainly at Blue Gate - I don't know about other gates - who were really very mentally unwell, and it was very difficult because we didn't want to be handing them over to the state, but how to support them when you're so struggling just with the

conditions and everything. That was quite difficult as well. We didn't have any expertise, really, in that field. But we could, and then they'd wander off at night, they'd disappear for days, and we didn't know where they'd be - they might have hitched to London. I mean it was really scary, and then they'd rock up. And actually I think there was one time the sofa got set on fire, and it was one of these women. You know - it wasn't always vigilantes! (Laughs). Or like the post - we'd have a sort of tin box for the post to go in, and one morning we woke up and the post was all burnt, you know. There'd been a fire in the post tin.

Yes, a lot of patience and tolerance in that, isn't there - given the challenges from the authorities, to be managing those types of mental health issues, and conflict, and the survival as well.

Yeah.

It's a lot isn't it?

It was huge, and you know a lot - I wasn't one of the younger women, but like I say - 15 - you're just like, you know you'd got no, probably no experience of any of this, and um, but you could just concentrate on going wood-ing and you know, sawing up the wood. Er. Right. Oh yeah, do you know about the Salisbury Plain walks? We did some walks across Salisbury Plain?

Only what you spoke to Becca about.

Yeah, I, I'd one of them, and so we - yeah we'd gather at Avebury, there were quite a few sort of er, little women's festivals at Avebury, and um, then, so we'd take over the car park, camp for the night there, and then set off - it was a three day walk, um, and so that was, and we'd end up at Stonehenge, just near, yeah Stonehenge. Yeah we did that - we walked across Salisbury Plain or the bomb you know, the sites.

And, because I mean there's quite a lot of activity...

Yeah, the red flags, the red flags. We stuck to the sort of route, the path route, you know, and actually it was quite good practice for doing the Women's Aid to former Yugoslavia, because you've be driving through, in a war zone, you know there was no traffic except military traffic. There was military road blocks and you couldn't get out and have a piss in the bush because of landmines. So you know, that was difficult conditions as well. And also we had no EU, we only had faxes, um we'd have to sleep one, I went - the last one that I did was just after that Dayton Agreement was signed, so it had stopped officially being a war, and so we were able to get into Serbia, because we'd been supporting Women in Black in Serbia, but because of the

sanctions we didn't try driving into Serbia. So after the Dayton Agreement, we could actually take some aid, so I did that - it was only the one truck. And I didn't end up with a co-driver. We had three - we usually had two drivers and one admin because we had all these different currencies and different rules about prices on the road, and then, also some of the like, I had to go through Hungary to get to Serbia - they shut the customs points overnight, so we had to sleep in the trucks with like three miles of Russian trucks waiting to come into Serbia in the morning, and us in our little seven and a half tonne-r, you know three women again - there's no way we went out for a piss. We had a piss bottle in the cab. And we had to sort of - we'd got trucks with two bunks, but then one of us would have to sleep across the seats with the gear stick. Um, yeah, so that was quite challenging! (Laughs). And we got to our host group in um, Belgrade and they - we had to go to a safe house and unload some of the aid, because they said it's too unsafe to go to these camps because they haven't had any aid all winter, and if you turn up, you will just get mobbed. So, um, yeah - you know, you learnt a lot, and then we'd come back and have to do reports. And that. We had a knicker project one time to take knickers and sanitary stuff and nappies, and we supported a medial thing called - oh god, I think it's called WATVI ...anyway supported a medical centre - I think this was in Bosnia, so took a lot of medicines out there, and also delivered training - rape crisis training, trauma training, so one of the women, Sian, she, from being involved in camp, she was really the - she was the key sort of woman in Southampton that facilitated WATVI - she had an office and she had a fax. (Laughs). Um, she ended up working for amnesty as one of the Balkans representatives - she's just retired now. But she carried on with those connections, so she told me like last year that that medical centre is still happening, it's still there, and the women - they took it on, it's their project, we just supported the to get it going they said 'We are so pleased that we are here and we have this expertise, because now when women are escaping from Syria or wherever, we know what to do, because you showed - you helped us to know what to do'.

Wow, what a fantastic legacy.

Yeah. Absolutely, it's quite sort of wooah (breathes in audibly).

Yeah, it is it's great, because it's very unusual for things like that not to - over the years, not to lose their funding and disappear, you know.

Yeah, or to be taken over by the UN. So, yeah.

So in terms of, if there was a sort of piece of art or some kind of picture that you have in your head, is there something you think that represents Greenham to you? I mean I know it's difficult because it's so many years, but when somebody says Greenham to you, is there something that flashes into your head?

It's the bailiffs! The bailiffs and the sort of horrendous state - the only good thing about the bailiffs is that they'd take the rubbish away! (Laughs). Because it was quite a thing having to get rid of the rubbish. So the bailiffs really, and the relentless mess that um, and the you know - sleeping with your boots on. Yeah, really.

And so given that this is a project that we're hoping will create the Greenham legacy for future generations, what would you say would be the things that are the most important thing for people to understand - for people to take from the Greenham experience?

Well, this is a reference to the Suffragettes, but you stand shoulder to shoulder, you know. You mind each other's backs, that you support each other, and you're safer like that. And also just like naming it, calling it out. Which reminds me - the zapping - has anyone talked to you about the zapping?

They have, yeah.

And Elizabeth was a real worker on the zapping. She was based at Blue Gate, she was an older woman, she was a difficult woman - you know (laughs). But she was absolutely obsessed with the zapping.

Explain just...

Yeh said, the zapping was, it was actually low frequency being used, I mean they were experimenting with it in Russia as well as here, but, and we - because we had to tell women that were present to not come, because it put our periods out of synch - that was maybe why we had the moon charts about when we were bleeding, I don't really know, but also you could see the squaddies getting disorientated by it as well. If they were zapping the gate, then it was affecting the squaddies that were at the gate as well.

And how long did that go on for?

I don't know, probably quite a long time, because they were experimenting on us. I mean now everyone thinks it's okay - um, we've got so used to the idea of high frequency and low frequency because of the mobile network and the digital thing, and I'm really worried about like 5G - we're all fucked. You know, our brains are already being completely zapped, and um, it's an extension of that, but it was low frequency, and it disorientates you, makes you sick. Some women I mean, I know quite a few women who were at camp quite a while and were zapped and have had thyroid problems and had goitres and have had to have the operations and be on

thyroxin and stuff, so it was a sort of hormone disrupter as well. Yeah, basically a hormone disruptor that would be the menstrual cycle. I'm not very good on biology and science, but that's what the zapping was. So we did zapping actions, which were about holding tin foil up as a shield to it, and that was to reflect - I think water is actually more of a barrier, now I understand that water is more of a barrier to it. But we did zapping actions where we did tin foil. Elizabeth sort of, and she got us, you know, on that one. So one of the actions was like 'Bring tin foil, bring shiny metal things and we're going to hold it all up to the gates to highlight the zapping thing.' But people thought we were nuts.

What the residents and people?

Oh no, going back to the residents, we were banned from everywhere in Newbury, except the Quakers who again, even with their amazing sort of white poppy business, it was very difficult for the Newbury Quakers to vote to come and support us. They used to come and do a - there were various religious groups that used to come and do Sunday morning prayer meetings and vigils, well we'd be very respectful of 'Let's not make too much noise'. In the end they turned over their meeting hall, which was right next to Newbury bus station, which was fantastic because women would get off the bus, quite disorientated with all these bags, and they installed a shower and a washing machine and a dryer. Because drying things was a nightmare. And we could have meetings there if we were planning NVDA where we wanted a private, we could talk there, so that was a really supportive thing. And there was one cafe called The Empire Grill which would let us in. Because we did stink, you couldn't really not stink. And then you think 'What the fuck, we're covered in mud, we'll only get covered in mud as soon as we go back.' And dole day was a big day for the signing on, and it was market day I think. So yeah, we were banned from everywhere except The Empire Grill, which was quite near the bus station and the Quaker meeting house.

So given that standing shoulder to shoulder was - is something you feel is a Greenham legacy, how did you feel about the conflicts that came later on that seemed to split the camp?

What, with the Yellow Gate thing?

Yeah.

Um, well, we were just pissed off because we felt that our thing was being taken over and hijacked, so you know one of the difficult things to negotiate around that was the post and the money, because um, because originally there was only the main gate, and then after there was more than one camp we stopped calling it Main Gate,

because it's like there are no leaders, so then we took on the rainbow colours - partly for the big actions, but you know, we had to rest, we had to get our own bank account and our own signatories and er, get women to actually choose women who they were going to send their donations in! So if it was our newsletter that went out with our, I mean Blue Gate, we did a lot of newsletters from Blue Gate, we would be the ones that did the money. If we went on a march or a speak or anything we would be doing budgeting, so we would get the money. We would go to like Women's Disco in reading and bucket there, or arrange things at Bristol - there was a lot of coming and going from Bristol as well. So, the money was a big problem, and then what happened with the sanctuary went on and on and on and on and on.

And what did - what was the issue?

What the issue was, the Yellow Gate took it over and um, you now all the time that camp was there, but after camp had left, me and my girlfriend at the time, we went up to Blue Gate to remove the last caravan - there were like three women left at Blue Gate, and it was looking like the fence as coming down and it was not sustainable - everyone was absolutely fed up anyway, so we went and moved the last caravan, it was a really emotional, difficult time. But the Yellow Gate women stayed on and they were inhabiting - they weren't even necessarily Yellow Gate women anymore - so they stayed on because it was owned land - they had some trailers on there, big statics. And for a while there were a couple of women, like Spud was one of them, who would stop by and do a little bit of exchange of information about what's happening in the base or whatever. And then, after camp had broken, finished, but um, we - I headed, because we had some meetings, we had reunions at Orange Gate partly to deal with the archiving of all the materials, and so when um, when the land was bought there were three signatories - Evelyn was one of them, Evelyn lived outside Newbury, but um, er, oh god it was Lynette - it was Lynette that had the diaries, actually in Newbury, not Evelyn - Evelyn had a small holding and she was always bringing us vegetables, and she was one that worked with the commoners, she was an older woman, and um, god yeah it was Lynette in Newbury that had the storage. So there were three signatories, one of them was Evelyn, one of them was a woman who soon after was disappeared into the mental health system and was completely lost track of, I can't remember her name, I probably wouldn't say it anyway, but we never knew what happened to her, and one of them was Katrina Howse. And so Evelyn really wanted shot of the responsibility of this, because we couldn't sell it, what we would have liked we would liked to have sold it and donated the money to, I don't know - Million Women Rise or something, but or to some other project, Women's Peace Project or something, but we couldn't sell it, but there were only two signatures that were in total conflict. And then we found out that Katrina Howse had moved some bloke - some bloke was living there in one of the trailers, and he was paying her rent. And Evelyn was distraught 'I just want to be shot of it, I

just want to be shot of it', and I really, I think something did happen in the end, but I can't remember what. Evelyn Parker is the one you'd need - I think she's still alive. So another offshoot actually was Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp, so that was once a month, so you know that still carries on. I carried on going to Aldermaston quite a lot for the weekend, and you know a slightly new generation of women got involved, but a lot of it was slightly older Greenham women, because er, well it's part of the next generation of Trident, but also when they were doing the DU bombs in Iraq, Aldermaston was part of the, because it's research and development - they were monitoring the DU that was being blown over Europe and in the UK from the stuff that was dropped on those weapons.

Wow. So from the woman that I've spoken to, class seems to be quite a source of - not conflict, um, but certainly an issue - if you were working class then you had these spaces or this voice, and if you were middle class then you were encouraged to listen instead of speak. That's - is that something that, I think it's more of a sociological - middle class women have, you know, get opportunities to speak all the time, it's time for you to listen.

Um, I don't remember anything that specific. You know it was - class and race were - you know, an issue. But to me it was sort of covered by things like nobody does an interview on their own, you always working in at-least two people doing that interview. Um. I mean Blue Gate was a very rowdy gate, but there were some very quiet women, and you can't - if someone's got, doesn't want to speak, it's not okay to put pressure on that either. I can't really say much more about that. Also for me as a feminist, and part of my feminist analysis is that it actually we should be trying, we can acknowledge the differences and the entitlement - we didn't use that word then - but actually you can be a very well off women with a very wealthy husband and still have no money, you can still experience domestic violence and abuse - even if you're a middle class woman, you're still - we have these things in common as well - you may well have still experienced child sex abuse, you might be, your family might be coercing you into marriage, or the shame of being a single parent - all those things would transcended class because they affect us all. And those were the commonality. And you know, certainly at Blue Gate we had camp dole, so certainly on a financial aspect we tried to sort of have a level playing field in that. Yeah.

Is there anything else on your list?

I think possibly not really.

Check we've done everything you wanted to do?

Yeah.

Christine is there anything that you want to talk about, or see more?

(Christine) When you were talking about the zapping, what form did it take? Did they have handheld machines?

I don't know, I think it was done from fairly long distance.

(Christine) I just want to identify how it happened?

Yeah, i don't know - you'd have to ask Elizabeth, she was the expert on it. What she made us do with vehicles - she said this would help with the zapping, is we had to have a wire, we had to have a piece of metal wrapped around the frame of the vehicle, and then a metal prong, and earth the vehicle. So she would always be going around - anyone with a vehicle, she'd be putting these earthing thing straps, on to - sounds a bit basic, doesn't it, but it's standard practice for electricity. But I don't really know, I don't really know, I mean people did think we were bonkers. That three months that I went to New York and went to the Women's Pentagon Action, also Judy Chicago's Dinner Plate was being done then, so I went down to Texas, because another woman in my CR group was from Texas and I knew, and um, I went to er upstate New York to a Disabled Lesbian Community, and there was one woman who had compensation - some of them were, had been involved in the anti-Vietnam struggles, and the Underground Railroad up to Canada, so I went to the Nyack Peace Centre and I heard there about, er, and again this was ex-military guys that were telling me this, and they were quite damaged - we didn't have the words then about post-traumatic stress syndrome, but he said that a lot of experimenting is done on squaddies who have no family, and a lot of the recruiting, I mean this very much to me is about class and militarism, but if there was a squaddie who had no family, they would be taken into military mental establishments and used for experimenting on. And one of the experiments was with implants, which you know, now is not really news any more we're nearly there aren't we, but in the early '80s this was total fantasy land. And he said it would pick up electrical things in his head, and he would hear, it would intercept the radio - it sounded completely bonkers and I came back and I told people about going to this Nyack Peace Centre and hearing about this, and it actually very much later on made me think about zapping, because zapping was a bit later on than the Pentagon action, um, but I think that was another thing about class and class analysis, becasue some women wanted to talk to the squaddies, and others didn't - there was completely - like at that point, I partly was at camp because I had a separatist phase which really actually has stood me in good stead - I was teaching women self defense and um, was working in a women's centre and I lived at Greenham partly because I wanted to live as free of sort of men zapping my head, and yet be still lie on the frontline dealing with men everyday - with the bailiffs and

the police and the squaddies! So I personally didn't want to talk to the squaddies, but especially women that came up for the day or the weekend, they would like have some Christian mission or whatever and they would want to talk to the squaddies, but I think you know, there was a recognition that there was like, um, you know they were being as abused by the system as you know a lot of other people. They didn't go to Sandhurst so there was a class issue there.

Yeah, I think it's perhaps to acknowledge yourself about the unethical way in the authorities - because people think the authorities are the ultimate in dotting Is and crossing Ts, and they think they're going to take care of everybody, but sometimes it's good to have that reminder that ethics is, the line is a movable feast depending on what outcome they want.

Oh yeah yeah.

Sometimes it's good to have that, you know, yeah..

Yeah, that's um, all those illusions fell away, you know if you spend much time at camp. Also the thing about Blue Gate was it was sort of quite self-identifying as an anarchist gate, um, whereas like well what was Yellow Gate at that time, you're probably going to be interviewing Rebecca Johnson, who I still sort of vaguely am in contact with, but she stood as a Green Party candidate very early on at Newbury when she was quite young, and that was sort of - that's a party political thing. It was a great stand, it was great publicity, and she's still quite involved in the Green Party, but I don't think anybody from Blue Gate would have been putting themselves forward as a parliamentary candidate or anything! There was too much....

Anti establishment?

Yeah.

And I have noticed that you know, so painting on runways, the anarchist symbol appears, it's not just the women's symbols. Blue Gate were obviously quite active.

Yeah, because Blue Gate was the end of the runway. Like Green Gate was the silos gate, and so you could see the silos, and then the runway went in that branch - the fence goes out and round, um, so that it was the runway sort of side of it. And um, yeah. But there were, that's not, that's the point - there was a range - there was no right and wrong, there was like well 'We're going to do it like this', and it's great that she stood for that - some people still don't like it, some of the women still (grumbles), but fair play to her, she set up the Acronym Institute, she addresses the UN, she's completely put her life and her health on the line continually, you know at Blue Gate

it was like 'Oh some women gave up their careers to come and live here, and others made their careers out of living here.' And you think 'Well, it doesn't really matter does it', not everyone can do what Rebecca's done.

But I think you've got to be happy with where you are to have that opinion, do you know what I mean?

Yeah.

Really. Maybe that says more about you than it does about other people?

Yeah.

In terms of your contentment with your journey and where you've ended up and what you've done.

And I like change, you know, which is why I ended up on the road for so long. Because I am now a candidate locally for the Green Party, but that's only because I can now vote. For 26 years I couldn't vote so, um and actually voting was an interesting thing at Greenham. We gradually got - you could sign on from Greenham, use Blue Gate, Greenham Common, Burys Bank Road as our address, and then you know, then we had the whole thing with the census - the national census, because that come round ever four, every ten years, and they'd do that, so lots of women didn't want to be on the census, but personally I felt like it's about standing up and being counted, but in terms of history and archiving, I think it's really important that some of us are on this census. And I've tried since not being at camp to be on a census when I was working and parked up in a forest, but there's no way they were going to put me on that census, it was a real struggle to get myself, as a traveler, on the census in the Forest of Dean, because they don't want those statistic, they erase that right from the baseline of you, because on the census if a county has got so many travelers, then you used to be obliged to put a traveler's site in, so they don't want those figures.

Right, so it's a political document as much as it is...

Yeah, yeah, it was a very political thing. I think we had big discussions about the census, and the same about with the er, with the electoral role, you know, and I don't know - I certainly didn't vote when I was there, or maybe it was more about the census, but there was that issue, but it's like you do what you feel comfortable to do. For me there was no right or wrong about that. There wasn't a big thing to have an argument about, it was a thing to have a political consideration over, and then we all make our own decision. But mostly we had other names, camp names, but so, it

wasn't a direct link even, but once you've got a vehicle you've got a registration number, and then they've got you! (Laughs)