

Bridget and Sue

Say what you were going to say, I do apologise.

I can't remember now. No, no, no. I've got it. Right. So we did that huge concentrated momentum of energy that went on for I don't know how many years it was. And then a lot of us got very ill. And I think you need to know that, a lot of us cracked up because you can't have that massive output of energy, emotional, mental, spiritual energy, and your kids and not get ill. So a lot of us cracked up. So I ran away to Scotland and hid in the mountains, took my kids with me. I heard, gradually over the years, that that happened to a lot of women, that they got ill, and then they took off and it was like a opening of a door for them. So for me, I just went and hid, and then discovered meditation and yoga. So a lot of us became therapists of different kinds, lots of us. So it was about going right back into yourself. And realising that the whole thing starts from you, world peace doesn't come in a great big loud noise necessarily. It comes from a very quiet place within us. And then you change the whole world, just by being yourself and finding out who you are. And we're very powerful in that way. So for me, that's what happened. And then I've met a lot of other women, or several other women who'd gone into healing arts of some kind or another. And so I just would love you to mention that at some point in it - but I haven't got any information.

The whole point of this is not like we're not making making a thesis or doing a PhD, it's literally whatever you tell us is what will be archived.

That's lovely.

Which is lovely. Yeah. Would you just tell me, I mean, I know I'm asking to repeat yourself, but the recorder is on now. Would you just tell me again about how you actually decided to go to Greenham, so who came to talk to you - you started a women's group? Is that right?

Yeah. So we had a women's group - innocuous ordinary, everyday women going and meeting once a fortnight, to talk about anything other than homes and children and husbands. Right, so we had to really push ourselves because we were scared. So we became politicised very slowly, gently, talking about issues that really mattered to us that were not domestic. And that was when this young girl turned up and said 'I have done this amazing course to teach us how to (inaudible) a war.' And at that point, we didn't know anything about it. But all our hackles came up and thought this is not right. This isn't right.

So we worried about someone teaching her that?

Yes, we were, because she was really swallowed up by it, she said 'We've all got to do this. We must all do this.'

What was he teaching her?

Well, it was the whole protect and survive thing. It was totally that - he was the local county emergency planning.

Was this Appleton?

It was Appleton.

Oh, so he was an official?

Oh god yes, from County Hall.

They had, the bunkers up on the...

They've got huge bunkers up there.

We went up on the roof. And we waited until Barton came and insisted that they monitor for CCMB around the island, which I believe they still do.

Oh my goodness.

But that was that was one of the things that we did locally. Because of the situation of Ventnor, um we've got Portsmouth and Southampton so if anything was bombed, you know, but the people that would have been in the bunker were all the toffs.

Yes, selected for, not the people we would select.

I gotta tell you, it was really funny, right. So her and me and one other woman chained ourselves - there's a radar station up the top, so we chained ourselves to it. We thought well somebody will come, and we'd hidden an ITV cameraman in a flock of sheep - he was over the road. We said 'Film everything. We don't know what's going to happen.' So nobody came. So we pressed a button. There was loud speaker-y thing, intercom, and I said 'We've chained ourselves to your gate', and it went completely silent. And this bloke said 'Here Fred, some woman says they chained themselves to our gate', and then it went totally silent again, because they didn't have any clue what it was about. Then 10 minutes later, police car comes rolling up and says 'What are you doing?' We said 'If there's a nuclear war, this is the first thing that's going to get hit, because this is a communication centre. So you need to know that, and you can't hide. And there's a big bunker here, but you won't survive in it. So you need to know all this.' You've got to know what the policeman said, do you remember what he said? It was brilliant. He said 'How would it be, if you unchained yourselves, and we let these nice men out because it's the end of their shift, and then you could chain yourselves up again.' Unbelievable. It was so lovely. So lovely. And the cameraman filmed a little bit of it. And then Colonel Appleton turned up, and walked up and down in his black leather gloves and pumped a bit.

He always did that - we've got pictures of him. Hands on his...

Oh my god, he didn't know what to do with us.

That was the bunker one.

This is, this is Sue and Bridget that we're interviewing in the Isle of Wight, just because I forgot to say at the beginning, and they're talking about actions that are - this is not at Greenham, is it, this is the Isle of Wight. ah so you did this home?

We did this first.

Carry Greenham Home.

Because even if there's just one person speaking, you have a voice and it's no use everybody doing it in the same place, somehow you've got to proliferate peace as well as proliferate arms.

Yes, absolutely. And so did you do those actions before you'd even been to Greenham? Or had you been and taken some of those ideas away with you?

We've got - none of this is in order. That's when we went to the arms fair and we chained ourselves up and fasted for a week in Portsmouth.

You fasted for a week?

We lived in the streets, and then they said you can't do that, you're going to get killed. We went in a church.

But we chained ourselves across the road because they were selling arms. That's horrible. And the local people in Portsmouth didn't know - it was like a supermarket for arms. We said oh you can't have that. Oh, did you do that?

No, I didn't.

That's a Greenham one.

What happened to you when you, when you lived, after you'd been outside and lived in the street, and fasting outside the arms fair. Did you get arrested?

We didn't talk too fast outside the arms fair. We were in Portsmouth precinct.

Shopping Centre.

We had a notice saying 'Please come talk to us', um and a lot of them were military that had been to Falklands, actually. And because I think it's a refuelling base, Portsmouth. We just wanted people to come and talk to us about what we were doing. And at the end of the week, um we the local people came as well, and we went to Whale Island - the arms fair, and we all chained ourselves up, including locals as well. But there were coach loads of these arms dealers going through, and lots of them were third world, where they hadn't enough to feed their people but they got enough to buy armaments. And, and a lot of this we did, every single action we did was for a purpose.

It was.

And we've always felt you know, we needed to tell people what was happening, and whether or not it made a difference, sometimes you can't keep quiet about things.

There was a huge destroyer boat, right? In Portsmouth harbour tied up. So I said 'That'll have nuclear weapons on it. We'll go and get on it.' Oh my god, so four of us we got this little wooden rowing boat, my cousin who is a photographer stood in a boat on the side. No, he was in a boat in the middle of the harbour. So then we rowed out to the boat with this huge banner, which said 'Defense costs lives', because people are dying through radiation from where they make the bombs. So anyway, so we got to the thing, and we start climbing up, didn't we? And then we tied ourselves to it and we unrolled this banner which was all my double sheets sewn together - it was huge. And nobody came. And so I waved

to my cousin, and I said 'I think you can come and get us because nobody's come', and then they suddenly appeared didn't they?

Did not know you were there because it was such a big boat?

No, and it's supposed to be guarded it isn't. It's got bloody weapons on it, and four bloody women got on and chain themselves to it. Nobody came. So then they did turn up. So then they banged us up somewhere, didn't they?

They said, 'We weren't expecting you.' (Laughs).

They banged us up in the dockyard in some sort of military thing. And then they didn't know what to do. So they thought we better let them go, because they're just a nuisance. So they let us go. And then we went and spent the whole week in the shopping centre. But it wasn't - we've got that banner somewhere, that picture of 'Defense costs lives', somewhere haven't we?

We haven't got, I haven't got anything about the boat. There is somewhere in a CND magazine, there might be a picture of it.

I'm sure I've got one at home. Doesn't matter.

But I haven't got - I haven't noticed one. But I haven't looked at all that stuff.

Anyway, that was good. That was fun.

Amazing.

Most of it was fun.

It rained half the week. We just stood on this thing in the precinct singing, with our Packamaks on.

And everybody said to us 'If you're going to fast for a week, at the end of that week, you must eat very slowly, in little bits.' So we went straight to the bakers and bought loads of buns. Great big cream cakes, didn't we? I loved it. Wonderful.

What other actions did we do? Oh, we walked around the Isle of Wight in a day. It was a bit more than a day, because of CCMB, Sue Puttock, who is very clever, did an epidemiological study and worked out that CCMB clings to the coastline - it doesn't disperse, which is dangerous.

What is CCMB, sorry?

It must be something nuclear power.

Part of the fuel cycle.

Ah, okay.

And we went to Wintreth, and the currents could bring stuff here also, we're in direct line from Cote Le Havre, in France, which is massive. And so and we were concerned about our kids, obviously, playing on the beach. Um, so we walk around the island leafleting, we set off from Ventnor, on Friday night, walked all the way around and got back sort of late the following evening, didn't we. But a lot of people sort of supported us along the way. Oh, there was, a nuclear exhibition wasn't there, at Shanklin.

Yes!

About how it was good for us. And it was all the people from the atomic power stations and places like that. So we made another banner under the lift in Shanklin that goes up the cliff, and it's really huge - like goes right up the cliff. So we got on top of that, which is huge concrete thing and let the banner down at the front of it. And then they got cross.

Helen Johns did that with us.

Yeah.

And while the three of us up there, the rest of them chained themselves up across the entrance, and they'd invited all these CND people and all sorts, and they actually trampled over us.

It was shocking. They were really violent.

They said that we were in the wrong - not letting, and we spoke to one of the organisers, and he said his wife actually had cancer, but he still thought nuclear power was a really good idea. I think they'd come from Sellafield it was, it was um, it was...

Wow. So this wasn't even the military or the police. These are people working in power stations, that literally walked over you?

And we were saying 'Look, there are clusters of children dying of leukaemia around these power plants all round the country. And they're innocent victims, because you want to make bombs.' And they wouldn't listen, they couldn't cope with it. It was too much for them to cope with. So.

And um, we demonstrated outside Plessey, which is now BAE Systems, they make...

Guidance systems for missiles, horrible things.

Yeah. And also Marconi, they were advertising for people and we went and demonstrated there and said did people really want to become a link in the arms trade, basically. So anything that was happening locally, we had a voice.

I think it's amazing because, my - like most people I imagine, my impression of the Isle of Wight is, you know, oh I went there as a child, I've got romantic views about it. And I - but if I lived here, I would only

be through things that you're talking about now that I would know that there was all this other military and and violent traffic basically going through.

Well, Plessey, BAE system is still...

Shocking.

Isn't it?

Awful.

And so many people work there as well. I still go to CND meetings. And there was a young girl came once with, you know, we're all sort of elderly ladies. And we thought great that you know, there's a young person, and she was saying how can she politicise other people? And um, the next meeting, she got a job at BAE systems. And I'd even given her one of my...

Aargh/awww.

And she was sweet. But, people are not always, you know, aware of what they're doing actually has a consequence, I think we all have to consider consequences.

Links isn't it?

And I guess that austerity and poverty, and not enough choices can encourage us to collude with systems you wouldn't choose if you had...

I feel so culpable in as much as the arms trade is probably funding my old age pension, you know, which is horrific. You know, the fact that say in Yemen where people are being bombed, it's part of the chain. We make masses and masses of money from the arms trade. And although they keep petitioning - Campaign Against the Arms Trade, and they

know that it's wrong, but the government will still support it because it makes money for England. It is so wrong. So wrong.

And then we took President Reagan to court. I have to tell you...

Yes, tell me about that!

I didn't know I was going to get involved in it. I had no idea. And some women in London said 'We're doing this. Do you want to be part of it?', and I thought I'll come up to London and listen, never thinking that I would be part of it. And the next thing I know I'm in New York, and you know, I'm a little person from the country. And in New York in the middle of the city with 11 other women - they were amazing women.

So who - how did you know them? How did they know you?

What - we, well several of us had all met. So there was Simone from Cowes who was very big in all this. She was at the very beginnings of it. And Helen John - no, she didn't come to New York. Susan Lamb who was from one of the original women that walked from Wales. I can't remember who they all are now, because it's all dim and distant past. But what they did was that this extraordinary group of lawyers called the Centre for Constitutional Rights, in New York, right? So they represent and support people from all over the world that have been absolutely fucked over by America. Right. So this is all South American and Central American countries, and shocking, shocking. And then we said, 'Do you know that there are missiles in our country called Euro missiles that are nuclear weapons, because you've put them there, because you don't want them here, because it makes you a target. So we need to come and tell you about this.' So they were extraordinary - this group of lawyers, they didn't charge us any money it would have cost millions. Eleven lawyers, beautiful people, and it was chaos. And I can't - I didn't know who I was being there. You know, what am I doing? I said 'What am I going to do?' They said 'Just talk!' And I said 'I don't know who to talk to, what to say.' And the very first thing that happened - I have to tell you, it's 14 floors up on Broadway. So I said 'Well I don't know what

to do to help.' So one of the women in the office said 'Go and get everybody's lunch.' She gave me a list. She said 'There's a deli down there.' And she pointed at it. So I get down outside the building, and I couldn't find it because it wasn't where she said it would be. So I'm walking around, all around Broadway looking for this delicatessen, and eventually find it. And the bloke behind the counter had no idea what I was talking about, because I'm English. He was - he spoke American English. He said 'What?' Anyway, I eventually found my way back up. So then they sent me all over New York to speak at big events. Shit, you know, god! And because you speak from your heart, it's okay. So it doesn't matter if your words come out wrong. It doesn't. I realised that after a while, and I went and spoke to a big group of very sophisticated lawyers in a very posh apartment in Manhattan. And I was - jeez, what am I going to talk to them about? And they just said 'Tell your story, tell your story'. And they were really moved, and um, came and asked me lots of questions about us, and who we were. And what had started us off. And they were in tears afterwards. And um, then, um, I had a really surreal lift in a cab with a Russian driver (laughs). He said 'What?' And um, he was taking me to do a speaking thing, but then I have to tell you, that we kept getting all these people saying 'Can you come and speak, can you come and speak?' So somebody said to me there was this journalist from London, who 'Wants you to go and talk to him in his apartment, he's running a radio station here.' So you will have heard of him, I think - his name was Bill Turnbull. Have you heard of Bill Turnbull?

The name's familiar, yeah.

He was amazing lawyer. So I went there on the underground 'cause you would, wouldn't you? And then I got out and walked to where it was. Pressed the button and he open the door and he said 'Oh, my god', and got hold of me and pulled me and said 'How did you get here?' I said 'I walked'. He said 'Nobody does that. This is the most violent part of the whole of New York. And you've just walked through the whole of the centre of it. I can't believe you did that.' Oh my god - I wasn't scared. But he was amazing. And he eventually came back and worked here for

the BBC. He was a very young reporter. And he was on television last week because he's got prostate cancer. And he was talking about that. But a lovely, lovely man. But we were so innocent and so gormless we didn't know what we were doing. We just knew that we wanted to tell our story. And have people listen.

I've got two questions that come out - well, many questions. But one of them is, what was the story that you were saying to them that made them cry? What was the story?

It'll make me cry now.

Sorry.

No, not at all. I think that...

And if I asked you and you don't want to answer...

No, it's fine. I think it was - if you talked to lots of women, before all of this, a lot of us were having huge nightmares, that we suppressed. So I would have nightmares about my children dying, and the world melting. And I didn't know where it was coming from, because I didn't understand everything - I hadn't read everything or listened. But these nightmares were huge. And I just saw my children dying. And then I realised about the radiation on the beach, and the beaches that we go to on the island are quite remote, beautiful wild beaches, and I thought they've got radiation on my beach, how dare they, and my children are swimming in it. And so telling them that what they were doing building their bombs, was going to hurt my children, all thousands of miles away on a remote, innocent beach. They hadn't made those links. And they needed to make those links to understand - because they were saying these are Euro missiles. And I said 'No, no, because when the Russians start bombing, they're gonna be bombing you too, because you're making those weapons.' And um, so it was making those links that was really important. I can't think of anything else now.

No, that's lovely.

Also I think you've got to put yourself back into that time.

Yes.

When it was a Cold War, and it was - we were just very aware of that a nuclear war could blow up.

Anytime.

And you know, and this could happen at any point, but it's all because it's been going on a long time it's become - like anything, it becomes kind of sanitised. It doesn't happen. But we were very aware of the possibility - I used to worry that if I got on a bus, you know what would happen to my - I know that sounds completely paranoid, but it seemed very real to us. I wouldn't be here for them, and I suppose it was, as I say, just, just to point out to the time, because it was a Cold War.

And there was a lot of fear about. But what one of the things that I discovered, for me anyway, and I think other women have said this is that you've got this overwhelming fear that just eats you up. It's there all the time. I can feel it now. And um, the minute, the very second, you take a step to change things, the fear goes - the split second you say 'I'm not having this.' And even if I just stand on that corner out there and say something, my fear will be gone. And it is true. So when we got together and started to do things, it was so empowering. It was just, the fear was gone. It was amazing. We had a really amazing children's party there, I've got to tell you - at Greenham. We had this wonderful party - it was your idea. So it was on May 1st, and we thought, we've got May 1st, we've got to go and celebrate at Greenham. So we said we'll have a huge children's party for huge children.

I never realised that I'd put huge children!

No. So we had may poles, we had the cake and we had may poles, and we told all the kids to bring scooters and bicycles, and we cut the fence, and we went on the runway and ran up and down with balloons and had a party.

So it was a May day celebration. Oh, that's amazing.

I did the blurb on the back.

Oh it's beautiful. Great flyer.

This is all letters - we didn't have magic in those days.

So clever. Dandelion clock,

I put that in the enlarger. I had a photograph of a child on the beach and superimposed the two.

That's very, very clever. And how did, that how did the authorities respond to that party?

I've got to tell you. I've got to tell you. Because we were running up down on the, on the runway, having a blast and singing songs and holding hands and singing. And then suddenly a huge coach turns up, you see, so we all get frogmarched into the coach.

With your children?

With our kids. So Susan Lamb was there sitting in front of me with this wonderful Welsh accent. And her daughter's name was Angharad, it's going to make me cry (becomes upset). So she said um, (adopts Welsh accent) 'That's how you ban the bomb, Hari!' (Laughs). To her daughter 'That's how you ban the bomb'. And her daughter was just overwhelmed. And then they drove to a gate and they wanted to chuck us all out of the bus. And there were lots of women around the fence by

the gate, and were a lot of police there. And the police got us out of the bus and put our arms up behind our backs and started hitting us. And...

In front of your children?

Yeah. And all the women were along the fence. And they started to - oh my god (becomes upset), they started to sing 'We can see you, we're watching you, and we know what you're doing.' And they stopped and they let us go.

That's amazing.

But it's that witnessing thing, which is what the whole thing was about, was about witnessing the crime that was going on worldwide. And those women at the gate witnessed that they were hitting us, and trying to break our arms. So it was extraordinary, and um, then we went and had a party! It was lovely.

Gosh.

So things like that - that wasn't a big thing, about 1000 people came, I think, but it was amazing.

That's pretty that's pretty amazing. And were you living at Greenham at the time?

No, I didn't ever go live there, because I've got kids.

We were there over a weekend.

Lots of times.

We had a bender, and several of our group - we've got pictures of them somewhere. We never lived up there full time, we'd just go for a weekend or go to actions. And as you say it, we found it empowering,

um, and helped us do the things here that we felt that we needed to do locally. So, that's what it kind of fed us, I suppose.

It sounds like you did you took like that Carry Greenham Home thing in so many actions that you did here.

Yeah, it was that, it was that.

Our children were part of it.

Our fundraiser, we had a big thing in the Winter Garden - had about five bands that played for nothing. And then it turned into a riot because they were all different - they were Mods, and one of them was called Damage.

Criminal Damage!

They were lovely though, and they had a really big fight and smashed all the windows and threw chairs everywhere.

The next day we went to Greenham.

I can't remember why, but I remember sweeping up, and we didn't have bouncers - didn't realise we'd need them. And another time, which was really nice - it wasn't anything to do with any of that, but somebody I think one of Simone's friends was the person who organised the bouncers at Live Aid, and they let us be bouncers at Live Aid - in the royal box. That was a brilliant thing. But just being together was a wonderful experience. And I wouldn't have missed Live Aid for anything either.

But also, we really needed each other big time, because I remember coming back from New York, feeling completely blasted by the whole thing, and compete culture shock. And getting out of the taxi up at my house, which is just up the road. And I thought, no, I can't go in there. I

had to come here. I had to come here and tell Bridget about it. 'Cause she would understand.

I had her kids while she was...

She was amazing. It was amazing.

Well, they all used to play in a heap like puppies. You know? Quite easy.

Did you have, did you have - with - what your relationship with the men in your life like around this? Because you talk a lot about each other and your children, and, and it sounds like I don't know whether there was whether the men who were a half of those children, or a sliver of those children were involved as well, or whether they were supportive, or they weren't? Because I've heard all different versions.

You go first.

Well, what it did for me at the beginning of it all, my husband said 'Oh, you have to do this, this is for the women to do.' And because he'd been at the cinema where we'd have that big group of people.

Just so - because we didn't record that, you had a meeting after the chap had come and talked to you about the nuclear threat and getting under the table?

You know there was a film called Critical Mass?

Yes.

You know about that?

Yeah.

Well, we showed that at the cinema, and there was about 500 people there. And he came and saw that, and he said he was really moved. And he said 'This is for the women to do. This is your role.' But it didn't last very long. So I didn't understand what was going to happen because of my empowerment. I didn't think I changed that much. So I started being beaten up a lot.

Oh, I'm so sorry.

It was horrible. It was really horrible. He really wanted to kill me. So that's eventually why I left here, because I couldn't stay here anymore. Um, and I think there's a whole issue amongst women being empowered and their men in their lives not being able to handle it. And I don't understand it, but um, it was horrible. It was really horrible. So I ran away and hid in the mountains in Scotland.

And that was part of that for you, that was...

Escaping, escaping, I couldn't - I was having a breakdown because I was exhausted. But also he was being really violent. And I think there's a lot of male violence as a reaction to what all this was about, and I don't understand it, but it wasn't good.

No, that's awful.

My husband was um, pretty supportive actually. Um I found when I was looking through this stuff recently that he'd actually written a letter about the nuclear power exhibition where, where we chained ourselves up and done a banner, and it was all very supportive. He's now a Hari Krishna monk - we split up a long time ago.

Oh gosh, wow.

He was a very good person and I'm not very...I'm just an ordinary person, and um, he was quite a control freak I suppose. And I'm very gentle and I want everybody to be happy, so he chipped away at, chipped away, and

I didn't really notice until I suddenly was just a grey person. Which wasn't what I wanted to be, because I think it's very important to be yourself and be true to yourself.

I totally agree.

And at one point, I realised that if I didn't do something about it, you know, I'd be a little old lady, a grey great person, and I didn't want to be.

And did - do you think that part of Greenham's, the way that - even though perhaps you didn't live there, but the, the relationships that it seems like Greenham created between - allowed you... emancipated you in a sense, I suppose.

It was a network that gave us, that gave us strength.

It was so empowering.

And we always, whatever anybody suggested - I don't think anybody ever said anything against it. We just always agreed with each other. And there were quite, a quite a strange group of us.

Very different.

There's Pearl and Clare, who I mean, Clare's in her 80s now, had Alzheimer's and she's... that were much older than us. And then there were younger ones like Sharon who is Scottish. And people - although there was a hub in Ventnor, there are several people all around the island - there was Margaret in.... Yeah. And people in Freshwater. And it was a bigger web, but it was mainly we were all in spitting distance of each other. And it was that hub that was so vital to us, really.

That's brilliant. And again, it just feels like that's so important for people to know, as a possibility that that you start those things, and actually that's gonna last you the rest of your life - here you are sat here as friends now. It's really wonderful. Um I was just also thinking, this is a

bit of a slight tangent, but I was thinking about the media. You were talking about that, that reporter who sounded really lovely. Were there other experiences that you - what was your experience of the media overall around Greenham or your actions?

Oh god...

Sue was brilliant at getting somebody there, whenever we're...

I keep hearing that.

Whenever we did an action it was always some - it was always either photographed or it was on other news. Because I think she knew very much that it's important that, as you say, it's no use just doing it and saying 'Oh, we've done that.' People need to know about it. And we did become known as Ventnor Peace Women, lots of people thought were a bit bonkers. And some people thought we were right. But for quite a long time after that, that, you know, they thought we were just ordinary people, and then we chained ourselves up, and for a long time people thought - it's those strange people that chain themselves up, and they're a bit strange. But put it out there and it was quite often in the newspapers - often on the front of the newspapers, what was happening.

We did we did this thing in the House of Commons, um, they were debating cruise missiles. So there was must have been about 50 or 100 of us that met up there. And we didn't know what we're going to do. But...

All from here or from all around?

No, no, no, from all around the country.

Yeah.

And I knew I was going to chain myself to something. So I just - how the hell am I going to get in the House of Commons with chains? So I put it all in a Tampax box. So they didn't even think of looking in there. I had about 25 foot of chain in a Tampax box.

That's brilliant.

So I got inside and chained myself to a statue. And then um, we were all herded it'll a kind of a thing with a fence put round us. Very violent, really violent police inside the House of Commons - really not nice people. They must be hired for their vengeance. And um, now before that we got to the door that goes into the Debating Chamber, four of us got to the door. We were going to go in there and break up the debate. But we - they got to us just in time, but um, my cousin was in there who'd photographed us on the boat in Portsmouth harbour. He was there. He's always there. And so he photographed us, and got the pictures on the front page of The Guardian, the next day - of us in the House of Commons, holding each other's arms and trying to stop the debate. It's always fun, always fun. So they chained us all up, put us in this thing. And then they said 'Right.' And so they frogmarched us upstairs into this tiny little attic room in the top of the House of Commons, like really remote garret. So there must have been about 50 of us up there. Just sitting there thinking, I wonder what's gonna happen next. I heard somebody outside painting the outside of the window and I said 'What are you doing?' And he said 'Painting.' So I said 'Do you know what we're doing?' And he said 'No.' I said 'We've been here hundreds of years. We've been here so long and nobody knows we're here.' And he just, he said 'Oh my god!' So he went along on the roof to tell his friend 'There's these women, they've been locked in there for ages'. It was so funny! And then they just let us go - they didn't want us in there because we were going to cause trouble. So they chucked us all out. And then the funniest thing was - we broke - that was treason really. So we get on an underground, and at that time I was smoking really badly. And I got on a train and lit a cigarette and one of the other women said 'You can't do that it's against the law!' (Laughs). Oh it was so silly, so silly, all of it was so silly. But, um, yeah, that was

amazing. But that was the first time that I realised that they were putting plants in amongst us.

Oh, tell me more about that. That's really interesting.

Um, I hadn't - I'm so innocent - I didn't think we were that scary that the Governments would have to infiltrate us. And there were two women - I thought I don't recognise you. But they were dressed the same as us, like we all looked a bit weird, and, and they were dressed like us, but we were all sat on the floor with that rope round us, just sitting there and supporting each other, and talking to each other. And they didn't. So they walked up and down all the time. And one of them had just a switch, like a piece of twig. And she kept flicking it all the time. And I watched her. And she was kind of flicking it at people, and really winding everybody up. Big time - really getting people scared and winding them up. And it wasn't 'til afterwards I thought, I know who you are. I know who you are. You're not one of us. I don't know who's put you here, but you're not going to win. It was horrible two of them - I'm sure there were lots of other times, but I didn't notice any other times like that.

Sue Puttock, who - she was never part of our group, she was sort of peripheral but very clever.

Incredibly clever.

And um, I remember we went to Christchurch for some reason or other to a meet some other people. Must have gone to (inaudible) possibly. And she got involved in this group. Um, and she said that they did, they injected her or something - she was very ill. Yeah, it didn't...

Who injected her?

I don't, I don't know she sent it to - I know this all sounds very weird.

I don't remember that.

But she wrote me a big screed all about it. Um, she was ill for several years.

She was quite dangerous because she was so clever scientifically. She wrote this amazing report about what they were doing, and how the south coast was poisoned. And where it was coming from.

I think she perhaps got too too close. I'm quite sure that it's true.

Where was she when when she says...

It was still in Christchurch, they met these other people - I've got a picture of her somewhere.

Didn't they go to Winfriss?

Was she arrested or held?

No, no, no. There were people pretending to be part of the...

Oh, I see, gosh.

It must be in this one.

Well, I know there are um, it's still, it's still not clear whether there was zapping and things at the gates.

Oh they were definitely zapping people at the gates.

There was some photographs of us through the wire, they must have a record somewhere of everyone through the wire.

There is a wonderful photograph isn't there, of a military policeman photographing a woman, and a woman photographing him back.

Yes.

It's quite a classic shot, I think.

Do you know the one about the bolts on the gate?

No, I don't think so. Tell me about that.

That one is Sue Puttock.

Photo.

She was amazing.

Grey hair.

This was a walk around the island.

Oh fab.

We've got lots of bits and pieces.

Yeah, well if its alright, we'll photograph some as well.

Yeah.

So what was the thing about the bolts on the gate?

Well, I don't know - there was seven or nine gates all around the base.

Yeah.

So the main gate, with these two huge gates.

Is that Yellow Gate?

Can't remember.

We always went to the same gate but I can't remember which one it was. It was Green Gate.

But anyway, we were at Main Gate and a couple of the women had a very special bolt, right, that they got from America. So it was made to some - I don't know what - but some metal that you cannot cut. You can't cut it. It's impossible to cut it. So they put it through the two gates. And so no one could get in and out. So all the people that wanted to go to work could not get in, and all the officials, no one could get in, and we just sat there waited to see what would happen. And so - it's on a film somewhere, you'll find this on a film.

It's in Carry Greenham Home, isn't it?

Yeah, they came up with the bolt cutters and in the end, they got bolt cutters that size! They started off with little ones, and they couldn't cut it. And they had to take the gates down in the end.

In the film, they, like you say they escalate the bolt cutters. And then there is a whole load of military police who have to actually all push.

It's so funny.

So they had to push the entire fencing around the, this tiny bolt, don't they. Is that the one? Were you there for that?

Yes.

How amazing.

Do you know about the horses and us being trampled by the horses?

Um, I don't - tell me your story about that. I know they did use horses, um, and in fact, I've got a memory of my parents training In case they were trampled. So yeah, I don't know, I haven't spoken to anyone else about it, yet.

So, when they were bringing the missiles, into Greenham, the actual missiles - group of us said 'Well, no, this isn't happening.' So a whole load of us just laid in the road. And we'd learned that when you lay in the road like that, and you were going to be threatened, you have to have an arm around each other, so we're all holding on to each other, so then you don't get scared. Because otherwise if you weren't holding on, and you sat up and looked at what was coming out, you would die. So we're all laying down holding on to each other, and we didn't listen to anything we just laid there. And they, they gallop their horses at us. It was really frightening.

Terrifying.

It was really, really frightening.

Did the horses go over you?

Over some of the women they did. It was so shocking. And those are the kinds of things they did. So you know, male violence was a very, very big thing. So I was going home and being hit by my husband for doing it. And going up there and having horses galloped over us. So you know so it did drive us mad. We did go mad. And it's normal to go mad.

Yes. That is the only sane response to an insane situation. Isn't it?

Yes.

We were there when when we rocked the fence down - I expect you've heard a lot about rocking the fence down?

Tell us!

It must have been one of the actions, but a lot of people just, we, we started rocking the fence and...

So many women.

And walls and walls of soldiers behind, and um, we realised that it was loosening and loosening. And there were people behind us singing - remember Jo Greener was standing behind us, and we just rocked it and rocked it and rocked it, and it fell down.

Loads of it - hundreds of yards of it fell down.

And it was on the telly, because my mother told me she'd seen it and how dreadful it was. 'Yes, mum, I was there.'

She was sick!

Oh no!

And the Halloween one where we all dressed up as witches and um, we'd planned to go and cut down - you know how the fence has got little wires on all the way around, and we were just going to snip the fence...

Next to the concrete posts so it just falls down.

It was quite a big event.

Yeah, it was.

We pretended to have a picnic, and we all sort of spread out along the wire. Then we got up with the bolt cutters and snipped it down...

And it fell over.

And there are some very bad pictures, I took, very dark, but you can see where the fence is just rolled away.

And what would happen once the fence was down, and there was nothing between you and the soldiers. What did the soldiers do, or the military police?

They didn't do anything, they looked aghast, and the plan was not to invade the area at all. We just rolled the fence down, because we were trying to show how vulnerable it all was - stupid to have something like that. I'm always saying it's not their world, it belongs to - the powers that be think they have the power to do dreadful things to our planet - it doesn't belong to them. You know, the planet belongs to itself and we're privileged to be here. It belongs to every every snail, worm everything, and hey don't have the right to do this - or to make the threat...

So, it was about revealing that they couldn't really keep it in a way as well.

No, absolutely. And a lot of actions were like that as well.

They were - very moving, but I didn't discover 'til later on that my mother, who was from a big family, had lived in Newbury when she was a little girl. And she had played on that common - all her brothers and sisters had played there. And you're not having this, this is for my mum.

Yeah.

And it's hers. That was, that was really moving to think they've taken it away, wasn't it?

Well, it was beautiful. It was beautiful. I remember I was the first time I've ever seen a (inaudible, but I think it's the name of a mushroom), as they grow near Silver Birch, don't they, and there's bits of it are woodland, and I love fungus, and we often walked around the fence and

had an explore, and met people and they will see a dragon, and people would tidy it, and when we went up it was a party atmosphere. Not, not for the people that were up there all the time. It must have been horrific and scary, and they went through hell.

Arduous.

But, but for us that visited it was, er, it was a very positive and most...

Empowering.

It was.

And I know that, well, you know, everybody says empowering, but it really did, you know, really did it. And I still feel empowered by what we did then. Um, my kids are proud of me, because I stood up and said 'Let's do something.' Sue's kids resent her doing it.

Oh, really?

So everybody has different reactions.

Yeah. Are they?

I've got five, and the two that were the oldest then - Adam was about 15/16 then, and Sophie was about 9. And they can't even talk about it. They're so angry.

Really, why, why?

They felt that it took me away from them. I didn't go away a lot - I went to America for 2 weeks and odd weekends at Greenham. But a whole, huge powerhouse of energy came into our home, with all this and it was hard for kids. I think it was tough on them, and they haven't forgiven me yet. They haven't, and we need to talk about it, but they're not ready to

talk about it. But the other three, the younger ones are not angry about it, and they don't want to know - they don't want to talk about it.

What a shame.

It was my son that heard about you and said, 'Why don't tell them about...'

That's lovely.

That's great. That's really lovely. There's a couple of examples of children getting in touch on behalf parents and actually quite a few, several - several sons, which I find quite heart warming.

Yes, that's really great.

Yeah, it gives you a bit of hope. Doesn't it?

Oh, well, I have a lovely son that I adore. I would cut my heart out for him. He is a gentle creature actually. And I have a grandson who I also adore.

Is he not so gentle?

Oh, we're all different aren't we, all so different, and we just have to be true to ourselves. But listen to people, I think it's so important to listen to people.

Yes, I totally agree. I was going - I was just thinking about the energy that must have come in with your visits. Yeah. And I know that Greenham women often are - the women who lived there often asked for that support and wanted it to be there as soon as possible. How was your experience of meeting the women that did live there? Did you have much to do with the women that were there? Or was your network more the people you came with?

It was more the people that came with I think, really. I did talk to some of them. But on the whole, not really. Did we - did you?

Not at all, but only, only Helen that came down and um...

Is that Helen John?

Yeah. But um, generally speaking. We just went...

We went as a group, didn't we.

We went as a group and stayed as a group.

And you met other women that were also coming from local areas, but not the main camp. We didn't meet them.

That's interesting.

Certainly when everybody sang together, there was a feeling of great camaraderie, I think.

But that day that I said oh, the day after they spoke to us, we went to Greenham - that day was the day of the thousands of women around the fence.

Oh was that Embrace the Base?

Yes. That was our first visit to Greenham, and there there were all these women. Oh my God, we had no idea, did we, who was going to be there.

That's amazing.

It was incredible.

I spoke to some of the women that lived at Greenham who said same thing, who were saying they have no idea how many women were going turn up.

No!

And were like, whoa, what have we done?

No mobile phones, no internet.

It's remarkable.

Letters.

Telephone trees. I remember my mum being part of a telephone tree.

And they would send you a letter and say, will you photocopy this 10 times and hand it round - and that's how it went?

That's extraordinary.

It is extraordinary.

Do you know the story of the hundred monkeys?

No.

Oh my god. Well, that's what Greenham is. Right, so there was an anthropologist studying animals on a remote island. And she was there for a year I think, watching the monkeys and studying them. And just instantly she picked up the fruit under a tree and washed it in a stream before she ate it. And then she realised that the monkeys were all doing that - so they were all washing the fruit too. And then she was told that at the same time on another remote island, about 500 miles away, the monkey started washing the fruit.

That's collective consciousness.

So that's what we were doing.

Wow.

And that was pretty much what it was like.

And that's what we need again.

I know you can't repeat Greenham, but something's got to spark and happen, because we find ourselves again in a situation of terrific nuclear prepar.... I can't even say it!

Preparation.

Yes, you know, and it's, something's got to happen. So as I say, it doesn't belong to those nine powers that have nuclear power. It belongs to the people.

There will be some massive eruption about Trump and all of that.

It needs another spark.

It will come.

You can't do another Greenham because that was such a special thing, to repeat it - I don't know that it would work. But something inventive, and powerful with collective consciousness does need to happen. If I could think of something, I would do it!

That's kind of a legacy question, isn't it? Sort of, we talked a bit about how Suffrage has been so celebrated, but it doesn't seem to be connected to other kinds of radical female action or women only organisation or anything like that. Why do you think that - why do you

think that is? Do you think there's a, yeah, what's your theory about why Greenham is dropped out of the common consciousness?

Because men control the media.

I don't know that it's as simplistic as that.

No, probably isn't.

But I mean, that may well be, that may well be. I don't know. I really don't know. But as you as you say it, it has happened and it has all disappeared from, from, from history somehow. And er, it was such a vital thing for all of us, and it was such a big movement. I don't know why it dissipated.

To have changed women's lives.

Which it did.

Did you ever see a film called Four Minutes to Midnight?

No, I have heard of it.

Well, that was amazing, and I remember one of the things that he said in - Nicholas Humphries wasn't it? But he said that um, sometimes things are too big for people to contemplate. So he gave the example of, um, was it Captain Cook when he got to wherever it was, he went, and this huge boat ties up and all the local people on the island, on the beach are just looking at it, not not worrying about it, but wondering what it was. But as soon as they put a little boat down into the sea, and they rowed to the shore, they were terrified. Terrified.

I'm sure that this is true. It's, because there is so much - such a big threat. That, you can't handle it. It's like the Vietnam War. That was horrific. But one day - in the paper, there was a little girl running with

her back on fire, that stopped the war, because it was so horrific one child...

They humanised it, brought it into focus.

Absolutely. And the refugee crisis, suddenly there's somebody carrying a dead son out of the water in Greece and everybody, suddenly they can, they can relate to a smaller thing. They can't relate to such a big thing.

The scale.

Yeah. So and until it touches people, it somehow needs to touch people in some small way that fires them up, I think, rather than this enormous thing that you really don't think they can do anything about.

Yeah, I think that's, and that's certainly, yeah, certainly true. And I think that the media isn't brilliant at connecting the dots for us. So it encourages us to view things as out of our control and just happening, and there's no point - it's all bad news anyways, then, rather than looking at where things link up and effect change.

Whereas in actual fact, while we let things happen, we're all culpable.

Yes.

And when we do something, everything is possible.

Gosh, that's a wonderful sentence. I want that on a sash and a T shirt, a bag.

I've already forgotten - what did I say?!

If we don't do anything, we're all culpable. And when we do work together, everything is possible.

That's it!

Well done!

I like that. Yeah, I love that - that's going in the exhibition. And you mentioned quite often about song, and I notice it comes up a lot with Greenham, and obviously - how do you how do you feel? Because lots of song and webs and imagery and art, and the art that you made on that flyer - how do you feel that art and song were kind of used as part of the collective endeavour?

Creativity. There's no good saying 'I've got a big bomb.' 'I've got a bigger bomb.' You've got to say 'No, we've got a pretty bomb!' You know, it's the antithesis isn't it? You know, you become - whereas this aspect of horrificness is negative, you've got to combat it with positivity. Possibly.

Yeah.

I think there's something really profound about song. So for me because of yoga - you do a lot of chanting in yoga.

Of course, yes.

And it's incredibly powerful. So the chanting that you're do in yoga, right literally changes every cell in your body, because it's so powerful. So when you sing, it's really empowering. So it opens up the energy system in the body. And it's more than just what you think it is. It's much more. And I'd never sung that way before. I just loved it. Absolutely loved it. We sang all the time.

What sort of form did song take at Greenham - or and part of that?

We used to sing all the way up in the car.

Yes!

Used to sing all the way back in, in the car.

What sort of stuff did you sing?

I've got most awful voice on the planet.

Didn't matter.

Yeah, but 'You Can't Kill the Spirit', we used to sing endlessly, there were so many Greenham songs, we sang Greenham songs, and, and as a hub, just a little group of us - we just felt like we could change the world.

Do you know the mansion song?

The mansion song?

The mountain.

The mountain. I don't know if I do.

I have dreamed on this mountain since first I was my mother's daughter.

Oh, that's lovely. I don't really know it.

Well, there were a group of women in America. What's the time?

Is that nearly time, for Sue to... Okay, just tell this story, then we'll pause and we'll get your photograph.

Right. So, um, it's a really simple song. So that was a group of women in America, and it's called strip mining. So they were, um, it was a horrendous work. And a lot of them died doing this strip mining, and

they couldn't feed their kids. And so this song was written about them. And we picked up on it and about how it was the same for us - that what we were doing was about our kids, and about the earth. So I can't sing it because it will make me cry a lot. But the words are I have dreamed on this mountain since first I was my mother's daughter, and you can't just take my dreams away. You can drive a big machine, but I was born a great big mountain built by many daughters, some died young, and some still living. If you think you've come here to take my mountain well I ain't come here to give it. So that's it, and we would sing it and sing it, sing it for those women, and for us, because we weren't gonna let them have us and our mountain! (Laughs). And it was so empowering, once I got to understand the power of those songs. I realised that it was all about music. It was amazing. And I just need to tell you one other thing about music is that when I went to New York to take the president to court, and we were outside the courthouse in the middle of the square in New York, and all the media are interviewing us, and...

Did the President turn up to this?

No, what it was, was a massive publicity stunt. So we found this law back from about 1400 and something that said, the Americans couldn't put weapons or war on somebody else's land. It was something like that.

Proxy war.

So we're outside the courthouse and like the main media from all around the world are interviewing us. And there was this young Buddhist woman sitting on the ground, Buddhist monk with a drum. 'What are you doing? We haven't got time for that. We haven't got time for that. This is too dangerous, the world's gonna end and you're banging a bloody drum.' And I come back and realise when I had my big realisation, that actually it's through meditation that we're going to bring it all about - one at a time, one at a time, and she had the answers. And we, we were just shouting and making a lot of noise. But it was part of a process that had to happen that led a lot of us to working as therapists in different ways to help people find peace. So I don't know if you found

other women like that. But I do know that a lot of the women got into therapy.

Yes, I think there are those definitely, it does seem to be quite a common theme. And Green Gate being so much part of that at the time as well. And yeah, a lot of women who are supporting this, I think, have quite a spiritual or a more therapeutic interest in the world. Certainly, I think.

It's what is gonna save us in the end, is therapy and meditation and a peaceful life.

Yeah.

So it's the opposite of what we were doing then really, but that had to happen. It had to happen, didn't it? As part of a process that led us to different things. So I would love to know what all those other women are doing now because I don't have any contact with any of them anymore.

(Edit in recording)

She said, we need to go to London.

Story about Hettie?

Yeah. So I've got - Hettie has to be talked about. So someone said to me 'You have to be in London, at this particular address at this particular time, and about 50 of us are going to be there from all over the country. And we're going to do something.' So we were going to do something big at Greenham. And they'd hired a lorry. I can't remember, anyway.

Lorries are quite big!

Yes. So I get to Hettie's house, which is in a very posh area of London. I can't remember now, but somewhere in - posh anyway, great big house. And I was first person to arrive. So knock on the door. 'Yes.' So there's this little gorgeous lady answers the door. She was tiny and wrinkled and old and elderly and beautiful. 'Come in, come in, come in', and made me feel so welcome. And her name was Hettie Vorhouse, you have to find out about her. So gradually, all the women arrived and she made us tea. She made us food. She made us beds on the floor. And we're all sitting around on her stairs, all around the house planning this action the next day, which I can't remember everything about. Um, but it turned out, you know, McCarthyism in New York, well she and her husband escaped from America. They were filmmakers.

Oh!

And her husband had made films there and they escaped from all this McCarthyite stuff and lived almost like refugees in, in London, and went on making some films, I think. But she was so extraordinary, and so thrilled with what we were doing, because she'd marched in the very first CND march, the very first one.

Oh wow, with Bertram Russell and all that sort of stuff.

So we just thought, you're amazing. And, and so, what happened next was, well, we did it all. And we went and did whatever it was we did. I got, I got arrested on the motorway. I was driving somebody's car for them. And they left me for 11 hours on a motorway with a broken down car - the police did, it was awful. I thought I was going to die. Anyway, that's a little thing. But um, then I was listening to the radio about 3 or 4 years ago, and that was Hettie on the radio, and she was in this - who's the really famous writer that's just died a couple of weeks ago.

I don't know.

Oh, really, really famous - it'll come to me in a minute.

Sorry.

This was a home for elderly ladies who are artists and creative people. And these wonderful women were there. And the woman that was speaking who I know you would remember, she's really famous Diane Hill.

Oh, yes. Sorry.

So she was in this home with Hettie. And she mentioned Hettie, and said Hettie Vorhouse is my friend. Oh my god! That's Hettie, who looked after us all 30 years ago. And there's all these links, and you think you'll never hear or see of people again. It was so lovely, because Hettie just made us all - she just scooped us up like we were her very favourite people in the world. And she was so thrilled to be witnessing it and be part of it. It was amazing. So the next day they all got in this sodding great lorry to go to Greenham and do something bad. And, and Simone said to me 'Well, you'll have to drive my car.' So it was a bright yellow Volkswagen Beetle called Buttercup, covered in stickers. Millions of stickers, Greenham stickers.

Oh, wow.

So I stopped driving down the motorway behind this lorry and the car broke down. So I had to pull in to the hard shoulder, and I kept pressing the button on those things that you give messages to - nobody came. And in the end I realised that they were leaving me there. And I thought I was going to go mad, because you're about that far from huge wheels of lorries. So in the end, I went and pressed one of the buttons and I said 'Well, I'm gonna throw myself under a lorry if you don't come and find me. I'm gonna die. Because you've left me here for 11 hours. I've got no food, no drink, and you're bastards.' You know, how dare you do this to me? And they came within 10 minutes. It was horrible.

That is really horrible.

It was really horrible. I actually felt very scared. Because I was breathing in fumes, two seconds from the exhaust pipes, and these huge wheels, and you start getting sucked in and thinking you're going to die, you know? But anyway, I got over it. So but...

Did you ever have any positive experiences of the police because they sound like they're...

Well yeah, this lovely, lovely man that was singing the song next to me. Did I tell you about him?

No.

Oh, we were singing, holding hands on the Embrace the Base thing. And behind us there was this male voice, and I turned around and it was a policeman singing the same songs.

Really?

And I said 'Oh, it's so lovely to have you here singing with us.' And he opened his jacket and he had millions of peace badges.

Oh my goodness!

It was so beautiful.

That's really lovely.

Really special. So the people there and I've noticed today looking at a lot of Bridget's photographs, that a lot of the police look lovely. There was just certain teams of them that were trained to be horrible. And that wasn't nice. That was frightening.

Yeah.

Being hit on the head with truncheons isn't nice, but um, they were frightened, I think - they were frightened of us.

Yeah.

And some of the soldiers were really, really violent. Like, I remember the day that Bridget was saying when we got the fence down. But just before the fence came down, we were kind of holding on to the fence. And they just come up with their truncheons and beat your fingers. Some people got broken fingers and there was not nice. So there's a conflict of huge, huge eruption of subconscious stuff for peace. And then this fear of that peace and what's it mean for us and we must protect the weapons. So.

And if you were going to hand, this legacy of Greenham, and why do you think it's so important to be handed on? If you, if you think it is?

It is because nothing's, nothing's been said about it. So for the last 30 years, I never hear a single thing about it. Women's events happen. The Millennium happened, all sorts of huge events happen, it's never mentioned. And I want it to be mentioned, because I want people to know what a massive uprising of subconscious um, energy happened. That was really gonna change the world.

Do you think it's partly because it was so effective, that it was so threatening?

Totally. That's why it's not talked about. And it's sad. So what you're doing to me is really powerful. It's not been done. It's really important. So for our children to know about it.

(Edit in recording).

What were you going to show me there? Sorry.

This is when we were fasting in Portsmouth precinct.

What was it like to fast for a week? I mean, that's really full on.

Once you've done the first day you don't - you're not hungry, to be honest.

Really?

I can't remember, I can't remember being hungry.

Wow. Did it make it harder to think about what you were doing? You were you were engaging with the local people, trying to explain why you were doing it. Did it not make it hard to concentrate?

No, no, I think it gave us - if we'd just been sitting there, we were trying to say 'Come and talk to us. We are fasting because...', and it was because there was the arms fair there, and we wanted the interaction with people basically.

That's brilliant.

And so we thought that by fasting, it would help them to come to talk to us. And all sorts of people did, as I say the military came, mothers of people who had been in the Falklands.

Really?

Just ordinary housewives, just a whole range of people would come up and in chat to us. One chap came from all the way from Wales to be supportive. We said, um, we said them 'What brought you here? And he said 'The bus!' (Laughs). But but we met all kinds of people and I don't remember anybody being hostile.

That's really interesting. That's really, that's really lovely. Because there was, there are stories of hostility at Greenham.

Very much so, and the only hostility I ever recall at Greenham was when we were in the town and people would drive at us.

Really?

Yes.

Like locals.

Yes. Well, I don't know - they're in cars.

Yes, fair, sorry. I mean, were you were in sort of...

We were perhaps just in a group and quite obviously Greenham woman, because we did tend to wear bright colours, I suppose. Perhaps they just felt angry.

Gosh.

It is quite scary. So to have been um, camping there and have people attack you at night must have been very scary, I would imagine.

Yes. What do you think made people so angry? Because it comes up a lot, doesn't it? There's this wonderful camaraderie amongst the women and then there's this anger, and, which turns to violence sometimes...

Because I think there's so much power in love, and creativity, that um, if you don't understand it - I think people fear things that they don't understand. So that's possibly the answer.

Yeah, I could see that, and changed maybe, the threat of change. Yeah.

And I think a lot of the people that lived there, they thought it lowered their house prices and...

Really?

I read a book - I've read a couple of books recently, because you were coming, I thought, because it's a long time ago! I remember all the good stuff and my mind blocks out anything bad. And I read the Walking to Greenham by Anne Pettitt. Have you read it?

Yeah, yes.

Completely brilliant.

Yeah, she's brilliant.

Her descriptions about colours and light and things. And then I got to the middle section, um, which is nothing about Greenham. It was all because of how she was because of her mother, being, being in France - I thought it was just brilliant. And some of it was so harrowing. And then the fact that they then went on to Russia, to speak to peace activists, which again was so brave. I think the whole story was just brilliant and the other one, it had a bit of barbed wire on the front, and I love barbed wire because I actually think it's savage decoration.

Hmm.

And it was by a journalist who'd...

Great name for a band! Savage Decoration!

Like Savage Garden.

Yeah, yeah.

She'd gone up and interviewed people, and I thought it was just really, really badly written. She's interviewed the um, er, the people that were living there, and also the people in the town, um, and how they reacted to each other. But she...

Interesting.

I didn't feel that she kind of understood really, it was very much an outsider's point of view.

Right.

Which is obviously relevant because any - anything is relevant, but I didn't enjoy the book at all. In fact, I um, I put it in the bin!

Did you! (Laughs).

Didn't want anybody else to read it! But that's as much as censorship as you can get, really.

I stayed in a holiday cottage once where there was some books that were all about how men have men brains and women brains, and here's some not existent, not substantiated pseudo-psychi...

In the bin!

Yes, we tore it up, and I was there with a feminist comedian - a great friend of mine, and we did not just put it in the bin, we did sort of quietly destroy it so that it could just the nonsense could not be read again. And then we sidled off on our tour.

This is another one from that week when it was pouring with rain, we were stood up here singing.

So it's you and is this one...

This is Phil Portman in the middle.

Yeah.

And Jo Greener.

So did you - were your actions here women only as well, or was it mixed?

They were women only.

It just transpired that way did it? That's interesting.

We were Women for Life on Earth, I suppose. But no men seemed to want to join us at all.

That's interesting.

Unless I'm just, as I say I do tend to block things out that I don't find particularly interesting now. Um. We got these things to try and keep us warm, because it was a bit wet.

So were you outside here for a week? Or were you inside?

We were in the precinct, yeah - during the day, and then when it sort of emptied in the evening we went to this, um, somebody had offered us a chapel to sleep - which I don't remember at all. One of the things I do remember, which is totally um, nothing to do with this, but because it made such an effect on me, it's the one thing I remember about it. There was a big thing in the paper - it said, the Pakistani leader must have done something dreadful, and he was called Zia. And it said 'Zia is a dog', and they'd stabbed 40 dogs.

Oh!

I know. It is so horrific. It stayed with me more than any of the other things. And because it was so violent, it was...

So senseless.

So horrific.

Those dogs couldn't have been less culpable for any of that.

Absolutely. But, the innocence of war, you think of Syria now - you know the desecration for every city and all the children and women that have been a part of this - they're no more guilty than any of those dogs.

No. Absolutely.

And we've just all got to learn to be kinder to each other, it's not about power, it's about reaching out. It is one world, and we've got to accept that we're all a part of this world. Without reaching out to each other and being kind - it is fear, the problem is fear, fear and power, isn't it?

Yeah.

That's our little bunch. And that was the dragon festival. And I had a lot of photographs of that because it was amazing. And I gave them to Simone and I never saw them again. So I'm very reticent about giving...

Oh, you don't have to give us anything.

You're welcome to photograph anything you like, but um, as I say, it's... That's us lot again.

I have to say as well, Bridget, you look so lovely in all these photos - I don't know why you don't like photos, because you're so photogenic.

This is a long time ago.

Yeah, but it's you, isn't it? It's still you.

A young person came with a baby. And there was a girl called Blue as well that came and spent quite a lot of the week with us.

Oh, was Blue a Greenham woman?

I think she must have been. Long blonde hair.

I haven't met her, but I know that name keeps coming up. I think...

She was younger than us, she would have been in 20s probably.

She was living there, wasn't she?

Yeah.

I'm sure her name has come up.

As I said, these are just snaps but they're all memories. This is the Halloween when we cut a lot of the fence down, and rolled it back, and we had these...

Witches hats.

And the police knew it was going to happen, as I say, and they were all in these buses and they rolled up after we've done it. Hundreds of them.

Oh really, and what did they do?

Because we were off home then, thank you very much. Had a picnic and rolled the fence back, and that was all we'd planned to do.

Brilliant. That's great. Did you ever go on the base at all?

Um, I don't remember ever going on the base. But um, we had a children's party - there are things I remember and things I don't remember.

Yes.

As I say it's 30 odd years ago isn't it? That was Alconbury when Sue was in America. And um, that was my daughter and that's her son.

I think that was in Elms - oh, this was where we are on the bunker roof. Some of these are really good fun. Under the bunker there's like a big hospital with lots of beds, and um, as I say there was a list of people who were allowed in there, and Sue daubed on one of these little huts 'Is this a children's bunker?' And they said it costs millions of pounds to put it right. And we always swore that it wasn't us, it was actually Sue and Jo. That's us climbing onto the thing and that says 'Civil defense at your expense'. Um, that's Sue on the chimney and me on the top and Simone, and I can't remember the others.

And what building is it, sorry?

That was the bunker but it's been taken down now.

And that's at Greenham is it?

No, no.

That's here. Of-course it is.

And all the beds were sent to Romania when they had the war there.

Oh really?

Just after - for the the orphans.

Wow.

And this is, again, that's us climbing - this is just local, local stuff. This is Colonel Appleton.

Doesn't he look official!

He thought we were all a bit dreadful, I suppose. And I don't know who took those pictures, because I'm on the roof. So I didn't take them.

No. Very brave. This is not, this is not a small building.

No, no, no, it was...

High.

We stayed...

Risky to get up there.

We stayed there until the head of the council came, and said that he would have symposiums where they would discuss the safety of the water, and that they would test the water. And as I said, I know they did for a while. I don't know if they still do.

That's amazing. Again it was a successful campaign.

I think they all were, really.

How long were you on the roof for, then?

About 4 hours.

Wow. I think you actually got what you wanted really quite fast - 4 hours is pretty good. Well done.

I think when they reported it in the paper, it didn't sound like - they just said there were a few sheep up there. But Mr. Barton did come up, and he did agree.

So that's amazing.

He was Labour councillor.

Good.

Yes. And he was okay.

So he was...

Do you want to just have a quick shoofy through? I'm probably boring you to death!

Not at all, not the least. Um, if you had like one, I don't know what's the one what, what iconic thing symbolises Greenham for you? Is it a smell, or a sound, or a picture? Or is there sort of a takeaway, sort of...

You couldn't, it wasn't a picture, it was a feeling of strength that you got from being with people that you felt were all on the same side as you, really. All wanting, all wanting peace for our children and our grandchildren. And that's all everybody really wants - all the people in Syria, I mean, what would they do for just peace? And those children that have grown up with just bombs, and places in Africa where you don't know, you know, somebody is going to come in and say you're the wrong religion or...

Yeah, absolutely.

We've somehow got to learn to - I know, it's just a dream, but we have got to learn to respect everybody for them, for themselves and their own beliefs.

And if you can't imagine it, then it's harder to work towards it, isn't it? So dreaming about it is good, I think.

I can, I can I, well you know.

No, I mean, I think that it's good to imagine it, it's good to spend time having...

You have to think positively, because if you don't think positively, I don't know the alternative is, really.

No. Um, are there any other questions I actually had written down.

Sorry.

No, it's nice!

None of this is Greenham, but Greenham sparked this. I joined CND when I was about 14, so I was, I came from quite conservative family, but the idea of Hiroshima, I couldn't understand how anybody could ever do that. So when I got the opportunity to join, um, I did so I've always been very anti-nuclear. I used to get letters sort of Xerox on grey paper, signed yours eternally, which they would - my mum would go to Aldermaston on marches. But there again, we'd sit in rows and sing, so that was empowering.

Yeah. So you joined them - your route to Greenham and those kind of actions - NVDA, I suppose, non violent direct action, was through the peace movement, rather than say through the feminist movement?

Initially, I've always been anti-nuclear in all its aspects, but it was, it was the Falklands war that totally politicised me. I was sat out here with my beautiful children, looking, looking at the Red Cross ship, and all the other battleships going out, and knowing that some people would die, and they were mothers' sons. And I thought it would escalate into something horrific, because err, Mrs. Thatcher was so fanatical and wouldn't back off. And of course the Belgrano went down with 300 lives lost. And then I think the Sheffield was bombed (inaudible), and exited. And then of course it only lasted a few days and fizzled out. But at that point, we'd already been just sort of so impassioned by the idea that this could blow up out of nothing, that you had to do something about it. And Greenham was a gift in a way, because it gave us that um, focus.

Yeah. If you saw Greenham depicted in a piece of art, like quite often there are plays, and, and there's gonna be a film, I think, which I'm nothing to do with, I just know it's supposed to be in the offing and obviously, you know, as a creative myself I think about all the different wonderful things you can do with the story. But if you as a Greenham woman yourself, what would you - how would you want to see it depicted?

Err, it wasn't beautiful. It was a horror that shouldn't have been there. Um, and the - all that happened around the fence was something beautiful in retaliation to that. Um, the fact that it was all decorated, it was somewhere where you could put messages. I think if I had it on a stage I would have a big fence where people could come interactively and put messages, and photographs, and sing - because that, that was how we reacted to something dreadful, was by something beautiful. So to me Greenham was somewhere we could put our feelings. One of these pictures is um...

I'm loving that one, with the banner that you made about the Isle of Wight women.

Yeah, that's that's that one.

Is it? That banner - how lovely.

These are my kids counting the Oxfam money, because as I say, I got into sort of...

Fantastic! That's lots of money.

And that's, that's my daughter with um, Sue's um, second to youngest, son. These are her two little boys, Luke and Jacob.

Aren't they cute. Lovely pictures. Your daughter looks so cool!

She still is.

Yeah.

And these are...

Are they still friends, the children, your children and Sue's children?

No, not actually.

That's a shame, isn't it, because they do seem real chums here.

I'm not that close to Sue - I don't go down the pub with her and socialise with her. But we often see each other on the bus, got bus passes and she goes to teach yoga. But you know how sometimes you can click in to a friendship.

Yes, you seem very clicked in.

We're just on the same wavelength, really. But um, that I don't know if you want to browse through those? Those are some of these sort of blown up a bit - I must have thought that they were worth blowing up.

Brilliant. Um, I think the only kind of standout, official question, that's on my list um, is just to sort of say why - there's clearly, I mean I feel very passionately about the legacy of Greenham, why, if you feel that as well - why do you think it's so important that the legacy of Greenham is handed on to future generations?

To give them hope. I think that so many young people these days don't feel that they have any power. Um, I mean, the rate of suicides in young people is horrific. Um. They've got so much in communications. Um. it's all out there for them, but it all seems so negative - if they could communicate in a more positive way, and realise that you've really got to take, take the power into yourself, and spread it, and be kind and loving - not all this trolling, I think, is horrific. Um. It's there for them if they want to take it - it's give peace a chance, war is over if you want it.

Yeah.

But you've got to want it. And to reach out to your friends that will give you strength, I think. And if you - if you haven't got that, just on your own, really. I remember sending down in Ventnor with a big banner. It must have been the Iraq War was it? And he said it was the mother of all battles. And it just, I thought how can you use the word mother? And...

Sorry, carry on so sorry.

I said 'How can you use the word mother, and battle in the same sentence?' So I made a big banner and went and stood in with this banner. I thought it doesn't matter whether there's 1 or 100 million, as long as you go and do it. And I probably did that for myself, because nobody else was listening. But you do have to speak out. You can't just bottle everything up that you think.

And I sort of believe that whole, that whole war - the Iraq War, the (inaudible) campaign, as a young adult, and that whole thing about 'Not in my name'. Even when it - even if you think it's a losing battle.

Did you go on that march?

Yes, I did.

It was the biggest shuffle I've ever been on. It took us 8 hours to shuffle around and the street was just full of people. I took millions of photographs. The banners were amazing.

Yeah, really amazing. I was actually part of CND National Elect at that time. So I was doing quite a lot of work with Stop the War and things, like, and yeah, yeah, and I think there's I think, that, that, that demonstration had a lot of - there's a lot, it has a lot that to answer for, in

a way. I think for a demonstration to be that big and then be to be ignored, I think that disillusioned a generation of young people.

**But you see, it shouldn't, it shouldn't, it should empower, we've done....
You know, if they still don't listen...**

Then we'll do this.

Yes, absolutely. I think that's the only reaction that you can have.