

Hilary Gould

So the, there is only one set question and the rest of it is all for you to talk about whatever you want to talk about.

Oh, okay.

Um, but something that, obviously, we would all like to know is why do you think it is important that Greenham is remembered for subsequent generations?

Um. That's a good thing to think about. I think because there are beginnings that, that, that we had, at that time, of a way of trying to make statements, I think, you know, as a, as a crowd of women that just got larger and larger basically, as the days and weeks went by. And I think we are at a stage probably collectively at that time, er, of having had enough with the way in which the world was going, and how we could see the threat of nuclear war very strongly having been brought up with those images as children, through the TV programs and things. And I think we were frightened of that, and also very determined to stop any use of any of these missiles in our localities, or where we were. And I think the the actual presence of Greenham was very evident. We are aware of it, where we all lived in Berkshire or Oxfordshire or wherever, it was one of those things that had its own presence. And, and I think that it was a good focus for a fight back against another repetitive threat of war, and into trying to get a better future for everybody. So I think that's why it's so important. I think individually it was important, because I think it was a way in which women could start to speak for themselves. And I can remember for myself, that it was the first time that I was able to have the strength at that time to say 'This is for women and this is what we are going to do. This is what we are not going to do with others, or with men' - to be swept along in something that we didn't understand, but that we made up our mind about these things. We got in our cars and we drove off. And we lived in a haphazard, and somewhat exciting way with other women, to make our voices heard.

And, maybe that was it. Maybe that was the first occasion in which there was a collective voice by women pushing back against the establishment.

Yeah.

And all that had gone before it. And it made us what we are today, I think it was, so, you know, in the individual way it was very important, but also on the political and social fabric of our society at that time, it was the beginning of change. And people saying 'No, we do not want to have this here.' So I think that's the importance of it.

Absolutely. And everybody I've spoken to sort of feels that it was profoundly life changing. And, and how did you find yourself there in the first place?

I came across um, obviously articles about the, you know, the opportunity to get to Greenham, but was really focused by my good and loving friend Jo, who, another woman, who was much more determined than I was at that time to attend, and had started to go to Greenham quite regularly, and I got swept up in that process. And from that process, we then got ourselves into a routine - as many women did, about weekends spent travelling across, walking around, singing, pinning stuff on the fences, and being very determined to make as much of a nuisance of ourselves as we possibly could, particularly when any of the missiles, or the lorries were being pushed through on the roadways. So it was um, it was an extraordinary experience, actually. I mean, some people have obviously thought about this more, but this has come very freshly to me. And I can remember that the sort of energy levels were high. And they were all about, um, a sort of sense of knowing that we could make a better world for our children. And there were children there. And I have come across other women who, known that I'm having this interview with you, Flo, who always saying that they were the children with mothers, and that they've never forgotten the experience of being there. And, and you know, the ways in which some women are sleeping over weekends, and living in quite difficult

circumstances, and how, you know, all the children was somehow encouraged to be a part of all of that as well as being this next generation up. It'd be interesting for you to actually catch hold of some of those people who were children.

Yes.

I think the one of the emails that I've given you - Ember, is one of the children there at the time.

Yes, certainly Becca Mordan, who is, was one of the founders of this project was there as a child. And it was her mother's involvement which I think drove her.

It would be interesting whether they actually carried on with the same sense of wanting to make the world a better place, and a more peaceful place.

Yes, yes.

I mean, before Greenham, of course, there was CND. And there were the long marches. And, again, very strong push. And I mean, I can remember that we all wore badges, CND badges, and were very proud of that. I can remember being quite young, actually, when there was a major CND March going up the road towards London, and I was not allowed to go and join in, and I remember being so furious about that. So in a way, perhaps Greenham was another opportunity to be able to do my own thing, and push up. I never stopped, you know, it's like a breakthrough. You know, just getting away from this shell of whatever it was that you were supposed to be as a woman, and beginning to feel that you had some collective strength to make things happen, and to change things.

So did you meet many other women at Greenham who you became friends with?

I think everybody seemed to be a friend. You know, if you worked within, if you were linking up with a group of women, it was just great fun.

Yeah.

But it also was very cold, and sometimes very dark. Um. So I mean, I think we all needed each other - with - the ones that had torches or whatever, they could find their way around back to the gate! And wherever anyone's little Mini, or whatever it was that you could sort of get into and get yourself back home. But if we were involved in parties anywhere, you could get involved in lots of discussions with other women about what was going on. It was a real interest. There was no doubt about it.

Yes. So what was it like going, when you used to go - talk me through a visit?

We all used to drive together, or the husbands would bring us, and drop us off and look very mournfully over the - there's a sort of ditch area, and they weren't allowed to go any further than that. They looked very sad, they'd go off and argue about it. But if we went on our own, we'd park somewhere crazily, and just sort of walk as hard as we could until we got to one of the gates, and then we'd sort of settle there and work out what we were going to do. And then we'd go and look at all the artwork, um, and, and sort of travel along and see all the self expression from people of what they had drawn, on pinned on board, and then obviously reporters, and journalists and people, you know, all sorts that would be recording or filming the activities of people. And then if there's any action going on anywhere, we'd probably tag on and join in with that. And then we'd get together - everybody seemed to link arms or hands at least once during the day, and sing, and that would carry on round as far as you could - right around the edge of the fences. And then we'd spend all our time just going as far as we could, or just joining in with people and sharing experience. And it was just ultimately fascinating. You know, it was just great. And people went to greater extremes than

us. I mean, there were women that were there, and you may be talking to some of them, that were our heroes, you know. We suddenly had women that were heroes.

Wow.

So, you know, you'd just stand in amazement that they were able to break away from their traditional roles, and suddenly just start this new way of living your life and this new life.

What was it that you saw as heroic in these women?

Well, because it's quite difficult to see how frozen er, women's roles were after the Second World War. So I'm talking about the '50s and very early '60s, that there was a very much more of a stereotypical lifestyle. I mean, I've got a great understanding of the parents that brought up us as children after the war, because it was a dreadful thing that they went through. And they were just concerned with stability, and security, and shelter from what was the most dreadful experience for them as young people in themselves. And I think the way children were brought up was, and we were a resource, we were a valuable resource, because obviously, you know, we were the future, and we were in good education. And all of that was preserved well, by our parents. But it was very much held and controlled, and we were loved but we were also held together as being a part of what they saw was right or wrong. And I think eventually in the early '60s, it just blew. I mean, it blew.

Yeah.

And I think Greenham is there as one component of that, the other component would be the self expression through music and through activities, and feeling free generally about what we'd - and I have to say, while I lived in, on the outskirts of Oxford, in a small collection of houses, myself and one more friend started the Open University. And then from that my friend, Jenny and myself, were the first women to go out to

work, um, out of at least a dozen or so friends. We broke that mould, about wanting our own careers, and wanting to further our qualifications and to go on. And I can remember the shock that sort of radiated around about the fact that there were two of us that had got jobs, and that we actually had a Mini or a car or anything - we had to push it down the road when it broke! And we could manage the children, and we were caring, and it worked well and it wasn't going to be a dreadful thing.

Yes.

And so the world of work became, you know, a beginning for all of us, and with that greater realisation about bigger things.

Yeah. And did you work while you were at Greenham?

I was just - it was very exciting, actually. Because I was just at the point of getting my first job.

Yeah.

And it's very interesting, because I think - I was thinking back about this, when we were going to talk together, that my father died in 1979, which was a huge impact on me. He was a brilliant man. And I learned a lot from him. And then my mother had died before then anyway, a few years back. But then I began to do all this educating, educating and changing, and moving forward in my life. And I'd actually been offered a job with Social Services in a health centre, which was also multidisciplinary, with doctors and psychiatrists. And um, I was starting that job in the September and during the summer, I was at Greenham as often as I could. So it's like, the whole thing was just this great big move towards a change in my life, and um, from that job for 2 years, I then went off to Oxford Brookes and got my qualifications, and came back and then ended up working at Broadmoor for a bit. And then travelling around as you know, to all these various specialised centres to do work - it's been fascinating, absolutely fascinating. So that, within a few months there was this sudden sort of breakthrough in the changes

in my personal life into a new era. That's what's so important about Greenham.

And that was instrumental in that whole transformation?

I think it was, I think it was the very basic move from leaving home, in the day and getting in my car, and going off into this big adventure with other women that started my own belief in myself, and what I could do.

Wow.

Yeah, big! And I'd do it again! (Laughs).

If only!

You shouldn't have this on tape, but I was saying a couple of days ago that I'm getting to the point with all the stuff that's going on at the moment of tearing my clothes off and running down North Street naked! But I thought, well no, I'm afraid it wouldn't be casting the same damage that it would have done years ago.

Oh I think it'd be even more important! (Laughs). So while you were, while you were visiting Greenham, were there any particular actions that you were involved in, or witnessed?

Um, I think I've witnessed a couple of yeah, really sort of full on actions and sort of got semi-alarmed, I suppose, about, you know, the pitch that things had got to. And I did also witness, the exhaustion, of some women, that had been there for long periods of time. And it wasn't an easy place to be. It was a very cold and muddy and wet establishment. It wasn't sheltered, you know, not particularly by the gates because they all sort of readily available. It was barbaric, I think at times and, again, I hadn't come across that so, so much so. But I think there's a quite an interesting spot online of the art that was developed at Greenham. And I think, you know, that in itself is extremely interesting.

Yeah.

That women were thinking in their terms of being the ones together with guys of having new young generations that they wanted to protect.

Yeah.

So that they were trying to think ahead as well as for themselves. And I think that came across through the collections of women that got together and talked, or would stop and have a hot drink, or bring their own stuff. So I think it was, it was like being in this huge group rather than anything smaller. But I accept that some women who were staying there for days on end day would have their smaller groups, their reference, as everyday started and they'd move out, and then come back to that. But you know, it was that, it was just seemed a big, big, big group, basically.

And what would you talk about when you would stop with...?

I think, I think the world and the sense in which war at that time was such a dreadful thing that our parents had been through, that we just really didn't want anything else. And I think it was the exploration of what it meant to be a woman, you know, that there was this breakthrough between not thinking about it and just functioning, and then suddenly with the education - the beginnings of real education that we all had, at that time, into looking at things from a different ways, through that education. So it was like education, and experience through the Greenham thing that I think certainly changed me. And I think there was, as I say, there were many women who had not gone off to university, and had children before their learning. And this was the catch up group of women who were saying 'This isn't good enough, we're not going to be happy with this. We've got something here that we want to prevent. And we want to become as politically astute as anybody else and have a say, in what's going on in the world.' And that was through education and learning, and a bit of freedom for ourselves as who we were. All big things, I think.

I've been struck in some of the things I've read about how much legal knowledge was picked up along the way. Um, do you think there was an appetite in general for people to know how to deal with what was in front of them, and gain a huge amount of practical...

Oh, yes.

...skills in dealing with some very specialist situations.

Yes. There were, there were, there were women who were heroes that would somehow be able to bring into the group, or wherever people were, what we should - we were able to do, and what we weren't allowed to do. So there were those, you know, the protest barriers about behaviour and how we needed to be cautious about this, but could be a little bit more energetic about that. Um, I mean, I was thinking about whether there was any really nasty tumbles with the police. Um. Maybe there were, but I wasn't witness to that - they all looked a bit shocked to be honest with you. And, you know, I think there were moments obviously I wasn't party to, but certainly, I felt there was an unease, it was quite difficult for the way in which we reacted to each other - the authority, and those who were not happy with what was going on. And I think if we went to parties and things, women would definitely gather together and then swap notes about things. Um. And there would be a lot of women going through college or, you know, we'd have people who were teaching sociology, you know, they would be talking about society and stuff. So I think it was a real cerebral mix of people. So we weren't just there having fun, you know, we would gather together and actually start to swap notes about what needed to be done and how you did it.

Really?

So I think, yeah, I think it was, I think, you know, going away from the women's thing, I think there was generally much more of self expression by everybody - by walking and marching, and starting off with the big placards, and the coverage of all the things that we're trying to fight

back against, which was basically a third world war that would finish the world.

Yeah.

So it was a very, very, very serious. You know, and we all believed it, you know, we all believed if we didn't do this, the world would end, because you know, who could survive that - you know, the Hiroshima thing, who could survive several of those exploding around the world?

Nobody.

Nobody, nobody. And it was to do with the occupation of the, of the Americans. And actually, I think my parents didn't like that either.

Yeah.

And I think it just sort of washed through into our generation that we didn't want to be an occupied country, with Americans sort of somehow planting themselves in us. I can remember my parents talking about how they felt that we would become much more exposed because of their presence in Britain, at the time after the war. And I think, you know, when you look back at all that, it sounds very old fashioned, but actually at the time, I think it was um, it was a nervous time. I think there was a lot of nervousness after the Second World War, and I think it just carried on for a decade or two, and we soaked it up, basically.

Yeah.

I'm going off the subject.

No, no, no, no! You're not - it's all around, it's all part and parcel, I suppose, because it happened at a certain time, and you get the sense that it could have happened at any other time. I don't - I get the sense that it, it couldn't necessarily have happened at any other time, as in it was, it was dependent on what else was going on. You know, and you've

been talking about the way people felt in general, and the mood of a generation. And I think, and a very distinct threat. I don't think it's off topic at all.

I don't know whether you've come across any of the other women that you've interviewed about whether they actually had a political family they came from anyway? I mean, you know, my family, they knew a lot.

Yeah.

And so I did grow up with that realisation about things.

Yeah.

They were very engaged and involved in things like that. But I, so I don't - I mean there was an inheritance as well as perhaps wanting this stability, there was this - generally you'd have these discussion points, probably quite late at night, about things that people felt their viewpoints about certain things.

So did you feel quite at home among the discussions at Greenham?

I loved it. I still do.

Yeah. Yes. I can tell! (Laughs)

Yes. Very, very interesting, actually. I mean, again, last night over the dinner table with this German chap, it's, you know, I find it really fascinating to hear how he feels about living here.

Yeah.

And all the changes that are going on that - hard, hard for people, it's a restless world, one in which we're getting more aggressively on guard about, I think.

Yes. I think you're not wrong there. Did people disagree much when they were talking at Greenham? Or was there sort of consensus, and idea sharing?

I didn't come across much disagreement. I think um, I think it was so busy that there really wasn't, I mean, I didn't sit down for ages and do nothing. It was just sort of slogging around and looking at things. I think if people were camping there in the evening by the fires or whatever, they may have, you know, sort of delivered their ideas or thoughts a little bit more about it. I think there was a disagreement between husbands and wives.

Yeah.

I don't think some husbands quite - I think I was quite lucky.

Yeah.

I think Jo was quite lucky with her husband, but I think it could have caused a lot of splits up at home, I think. And that, that would be a brave thing would be to continue to keep going with a negative backdrop.

Yeah.

Um. But then those women would then have to be more determined, I would think, to break that mould, and perhaps potentially go back to somebody who's a little bit cross, who would know? I didn't know of anyone. But it couldn't have been an easy thing for some women to have got themselves away and over there, from their family environments. It was tough on children.

Yeah?

And I think you know, you'd have to wrap up, and there's lots of wellington boots. And I think they got a lot out of it. I mean, you would

know. But I think that there had to be a time when enough was enough. And I suppose that was the starting off of my work view about how, you know, children are as important as adults. And there has to be a balance between, you know, the needs of bringing smaller children, or children that have got to get to school the next day or something, and don't have the sleep or whatever it is.

And were there are a lot of children there, when you were there?

They were. Yeah, that seemed to be I mean, I don't know whether it's because we had taken my daughters with us, that they collected together and played or whatever.

Yeah.

I mean, mine daughters were in their mid teens. So they weren't young.

Right.

So I think, early teens, so I think they were able to sort of cope. But I think if it you know, for smaller kids playing in those environments, then, and I think they were very well protected and loved. But it must have been exhausting. They must have been exhausted when they were actually going back. And as everybody else was, I think.

And did your daughters look forward to going?

They did, they were absolutely boggled about it, I think.

Yeah.

And, I mean, they're now working in London for charities and things, you know, they've carried on again, with these sorts of ideas and thoughts, and been through their own educations and their own pathways, but I don't know whether I could see them going out and joining anything now. There was a bit of a warning - it's blimmin' hard work, and they're

not too sure about whether that would be... I can remember funny experiences, you know, like one of them was convinced she'd got worms in her boots. Do you know what I mean, it was dark. We'd only got one torch! Trying to empty this boot of water, then convince them that they were all right, there's nothing in there really. You know, all those sorts of things that come with the sheer struggle of wet and cold.

Yes. Yeah.

But I wouldn't have liked to have, I mean, I don't know it would have been hard to look after smaller children, I imagine.

Yeah. Yeah.

They were well looked after.

Yeah. And in - I know you are obviously very interested in the arts. I'd be interested to know what you think and feel about the role that the arts played at Greenham?

I thought, I think it was very important. I, you know, I'm amazed at the need to draw and to place objects of sort of interest up on the wire fences. I scrolled through the online stuff. And you could see there's a lot of the - you can scroll through all the art that was there on the wire fences, and the things that women pinned up. And I think, I don't know - it's very interesting. I think they were well photographed, I think. Photographers, I think maybe the men or whatever, or maybe it's women, were seeing them as something that was important enough to place alongside the photographs of the women.

Yeah.

What, around the edge of the camp, so account? So it's, yeah, well, for me, it was very important, but I think for other women, it was as well, self expression.

And what made you pin a picture on the fence?

Well, because I think, um, at that time, radiation and nuclear war was not a good thing to be facing for any of the unborn generations. You know, I - can you remember when Chernobyl happened? That was later, wasn't it?

Yes. I think there was still a camp at Greenham when it did happen, it was in the late '80s.

Yeah, I mean, I can remember there was a lot of alarm then, at that point. Wasn't there, about people were moved away from the reactors and things. And we all knew where these reactors were. And um, people would sort of look at the drift of the radiation.

Yeah.

And where that was going on. Now you talk about it and thank oh my goodness. It was a bad thing, and I think it drifted across Scotland or some...

Oh, yes. All of Europe got a little dose.

Didn't it? So I think for those of us that were at that age, of having children and bringing them up, it was a sort of certain thing. So yes, so I did the unborn child. And um, that was great. It was nice to see it on TV the next day, or the day after - can't remember, it's a blur now, it popped up. So did many of the other things. So it's nice. It's been nice to look at that.

Yeah.

And I spotted, spotted myself in one of the shots there, looking very thin and youthful. Heaven only knows it'd be nice to have those days back again! Metamorphosed into a nice person!

(Laughs). And I mean, how much of the fence was accessible, and I mean you were saying you used to walk there?

We tried to - we walked around as many bits of the fence as possible. And I have to say because it's such a long time ago I can't remember whether you had to turn back and go back round.

Yeah, yeah.

But it's it was, the whole day's occupation was just gradually setting off and then gradually working our way up, joining in the singing, coming in having something to eat together - a sandwich we'd bought or something.

So would there be people clustered around the gates?

Yes.

And then would there be many people in between, or did that..?

Yes. Oh, there would be, you know, just, I can't remember a time where you would be walking where there wouldn't be anybody.

Really? Gosh.

Do you know, the actual numbers be interesting,

I don't. I think the estimates, the official estimates for things like Embrace the Base are about 30,000. But I don't, I don't know on a regular weekend.

Yeah. It was a sort of, there was always a sort of time when you knew you needed to be around the fence within these moments of singing.

And did the character change as you went round? Or was it you know, were there different groups of people, and different types of discussions, or did you just meet a mix of everybody all the way around?

We bumped into people we knew. And then you'd begin to get to know the people that were there that you'd see last time you'd gone there. So there was a sort of an ongoing relationship with people. And I think, despite the seriousness of the situation, we did, did have quite a few laughs with people about things, you know. I don't know, it was just a great sort of opportunity to feel free, I think, and to be expressing how we actually thought about things. But I think you came into the serious bits where people were really focused, organised, and ready for action. And those were people that were, well, role models for us. You know, I mean, they would be that the hero women that were out there, and had committed themselves for a great deal of time. And we'd be there to sort of almost support them - so sort of like the difference between the support groups, and the people that were there that were really focused on what needed to be done. And then I think because the TV was around there'd be a lot, lot more discussion about the Greenham common action on the TV. But nowadays, you can have thousands of people marching in London, and we've been part of that as, and you get 2 minutes.

Yeah.

It's just, you know, there's no way in which any activity of any sort, of people trying to say something different to what the establishment is saying that is focused on properly.

Yeah.

And I think that's just dreadful.

Yes, yes.

Because I think you know, you could get back, and you could be getting these discussions going on in the evening.

I think people are scared to discuss things now, though. I think it's, there's not as much sort of free and frank discussion about ideas without people taking offence, perhaps. I don't know.

Yes, I think that's an interesting thing. I think, I think it's there. But and I think people do it. But I think it probably comes and goes. I mean, like things that are going on in France at the moment, that's become a sort of routine, hasn't it? That at the weekends people go and demonstrate.

Yes.

And it seems as if it's an accepted part of what will happen.

Yes.

Is there's disagreements in society, and there's a bit of give and take over that.

Yeah.

I think we're all quite a sort of fairly rigid sort of nation. And it takes an awful lot for people to, you know, go really sort of bonkers about it all. But I think when you do I mean, I'm sure you've been to all these big demonstrations. And you're, you know, you gradually see the train filling up, it's more and more packed, and you're getting out together with people who feel the same. It is an amazing experience. So in a way, who cares about the TV and who cares about the news. You know, you've had this day, it's been pretty special for you. That you're glad you've gone, and that's the thing. I can remember with the war in Iraq thing (laughs), we went over to Hyde Park to hear the speeches and everything and we ended up trying to get out afterwards, and I remember being sort of shoved over this sort of huge fence with some poor blokes on the other side just standing there waiting to sort of catch

this lady going over the top of this thing. And you know, you suddenly realise, don't you, that this has to be for the youngsters as well, you get stuck in a corner somewhere that they know how to get out.

Yes, there is, there is something very sustaining, I suppose about being somewhere with other people for a purpose. For a purpose.

I think so. Yes. And it's a hard thing to leave, isn't it - then when you feel that you've got together and er...

So how long were you visiting Greenham for?

Well, I think it must have been through the summer. So - it's... that's six weekends.

Were your daughters in school at the time?

This would be the summer so they would be either looked after or they'd come. But they didn't come as often. But it seemed as if it worked quite well. There wasn't any - I can't remember any issues about looking after them. I mean, they were just that little bit older and hopefully sensible! But who would know! I'll have to - I am starting to talk to them actually about it all, and trying to get their memories. And I know one of them was here the other day, and we were talking about it, and she was just sort of remembering what she wore and, you know, all the sort of experience of that. So I mean, I'm sure you'll hopefully interview some younger people.

It will be interesting.

Get a sort of balanced conversations about it.

Yeah. Definitely.

And then I went off into the brave new world, whatever it was that I was in. And again, surrounded by people in the course of my work, who

wanted to help other people, and do their best for other people, in very extreme circumstances. You know, I went from one very tough prison environment into the world of caring for very sick children, and um I mean the wonderful bits of that are you gather the experience of how people struggle through adversity - how they manage them, how you manage them, if they're in need of, you know, some form of support and help and shelter. But it's also that it, you gather together for yourself the fact that it is an incredibly complicated world, and there's no right way through, what there is a way through that maybe can achieve something that's a bit better than what you've got already. Now I don't know what the right way through is with things. But I know that there must be something better. So how to get - make that leap between one thing and the other. Who would know?

So are all your memories of Greenham positive ones?

Oh, amazingly so. Other than the mud, and the wet, and the cold. Getting back was weird, I think. You know, coming in home. And after an experience of that day.

What was that transitioning like, back to...

Quite hard. Yeah, it was like, it's like bright lights - suddenly you're back into this established world, and you've got your role within that, and you're not just this person drifting around supporting something that's bigger than you. But you're back into this world of everyday life and things. But, um, I mean, I'd do it again, you know, if you could zip back, there would be no question. Perhaps for even longer. I think now I know so much more, and I've soaked so much up - how the world runs and stuff. And I've been in the company of people who know a lot. That, you know that they'll be back there, and probably with a better tent! (Laughs). And a blow up bed. I think barbecues are a lot better these days, aren't they!

I think, I think you're not the first woman who's sort of talked about that transition being a difficult one.

Yeah.

And the, the intensity of being somewhere, like Greenham, which is hard to follow on from, and a certain addictiveness of that level of emotional intensity, and sometimes adrenaline - depending on what people are doing.

It's, it's very biological as well. Because I think women do gather together that I think they have that, that, there's something about groups of women that are spontaneously helpful - in there's no doubt about that.

Yeah.

And I don't want to be sexist about all of that, because obviously, men have their things that they offer too, but I do feel that you know, with the groups of women that I'm with now, and the friends that I make that in a way there's a support - there is a supportive understanding between women. I mean even now being a grandmother and things, and I sort of understand what it's like to be a young mum, and you know, those understandings are handed down aren't they, between the generations. And I think just working with families, and seeing the range of people coping, and people not coping. That you know, it brings with you I've always wanted to feel I wanted to support people so they can achieve their best at whatever they do. And that's at work as well. You know, the belief, I mean, I can remember with some parents who were worried, very, very worried about their teenage children - that, that I'd say 'All you need to start to aim at, is that they have a roof over their head. And there's someone there for them when they come home. And start off all those basics, all the basics, and then gradually, gradually, gradually pull them back into the family environment, as best as you can. But always try and make sure there's a roof over these kids heads.' And I guess, you know, that's, that's me, you know, and properly goes back to the drawing and everything else. That, you know, we owe so much to young people, and we need to look after them, don't we? And maybe we did

that - that was the beginning of that as well. Seeing the generations to come needed a better world, didn't they?

Absolutely.

And we've got to fight for that again.

Unfortunately we do. Yes. (Laughs). I think another thing that's come up before is the importance of it being a woman only environment, and the sort of unique energy that it gave Greenham. I would like to know your thoughts on that?

No, I think it was very important. Yeah, I think otherwise, it gets to the point where um, we're always like a couple. Or there's always somebody there that's somehow directing, you know, your worldview. Um, and I think that, well, it's such a huge subject this, because there's a part of people in the '60s of women who thought that they were free and everything, but actually probably weren't. You know, when I'm thinking about physical appearance and you see films of that era where you can see that women are still very frozen within the roles that they have. But another part of it, I'm sure I'm pretty convinced was because of this education. I mean I was lucky, I went to a grammar school and I got a good education. But I think it was a way in which suddenly women wanted to learn, and wanted to bring into themselves things other than, you know, as I've said earlier, you know, having a fairly settled day to day life. And you could see it in your parents, you know, they wanted you to be settled. And they wanted things to be stable. They wanted everybody to be doing things that they should be doing. And you know, and they were loving, you know, I mean, I can only speak of myself. I mean, I'm not generalising. Everybody has different experiences of their parents. But I can remember one (laughs) moment where I'd tell my mum and dad that I was going to start the Open University, and they were horrified. They were horrified because they thought I ought to start bringing my kids up, and not concentrate on the Open University. And I've said to Nick, you know, how that's changed now, because so many women that I know, we've all gone off, and we've done these

courses and all this training and stuff, haven't we? So there's been a massive shift, I think, in knowledge, and women, collectively, making sure that they're sort of as equal as everybody else.

So the aspiration for education was not a given. That was a change.

It was just sort of fear, I think that you know, I mean there is this model, isn't there about the fact that we're better at home because we're concentrating on the next generation. And I can see that, I can see it. But on the other hand, we all need to learn, we all need to never stop learning. I mean, I am learning now.

Yeah.

You know, I've never stopped learning and I think, you know, that's been the sort of shift, I think for women.

So do you think Greenham encouraged women to go out and learn things for themselves?

Well, yes. And I think, you know, um, when when they had all this stuff on about the Suffragettes.

Yeah, yeah.

We've had all of that. And then we've had how suddenly everybody's realised that women did an awful lot of work during the wars.

Yeah. Yeah.

And then all of a sudden it all stopped again, you know, here we were propagating the next generation. So, so I mean, I think it was just one big push and everybody's saying 'Enough is enough. You know, we want more, we want more.'

It's, it's been interesting the Suffragettes being in the news so much. More than one of the women involved in the project, of the volunteers, has noted the parallel between the amount of media attention that the Suffragettes didn't get at the time, or the negative attention they got at the time, and the negative attention that the the Greenham women got, wondering whether there'll be a rehabilitation of Greenham women in the future? Whether there'll be an anniversary that allows them to suddenly um, give it a sort of acceptable positive spin, if you know what I like? So at the time, obviously, Suffragettes were portrayed relatively badly in the press, or they were seen as a threat and, and it seems that Greenham woman were also portrayed in a negative light sometimes. Do you think they'll come a point when they'll realise how great it was, or how important it was, in the way they have done with the Suffragettes?

Yes, I don't, you know I cannot see - I cannot see a breakthrough totally at the moment. I think what, what concerns me is that I think in our take up of education and learning, and careers and work, is that we've actually given ourselves an awful lot to do. I think we need to sort that out. And we need to relax a bit, I think, about ourselves and what we're at. I think a lot, lot of women are very supportive of the green movements, aren't they? And we went to Iceland and Greenland a few months ago. And it was awesome. But it was also scary because the icebergs were breaking off and drifting, we actually got hit by one in our boat - they're breaking off into the ocean. So you're going through the middle of these massive, great blocks of ice. And these are the, these are the issues that we should all be thinking about now. And all this rubbish that's going on about like which country we belong to, and who we're going to trade with. It's going to, you know, if we don't watch it, we're going to lose sight of the biggest enemy, which is going to be a changing world. And the way that everything is - it just stared you in the face there. You know, we saw glaciers melting at the bottom, and flowing into the sea. And it was awesome. It was awesome because there weren't any people. There was just the planet. And um, that's the next fight, will be to get everybody focused, I think on stopping this terrible destruction of what we've got to keep us all going. But I think that doesn't have to be just women. It has to be men - but maybe you

never know, women could sort of pioneer certain things, um, about that in their way. And have a bit of fight back about how we could live a little bit more economically.

Yeah. Well, there was certainly a strong environmental theme at Greenham as well wasn't there? I think, yes, the destruction of the Earth is a fairly, you know, fairly environmental thing, regardless of what causes that destruction.

Oh I would say that at that time was as big a threat, as we have now in facing the world will be destroyed by global warming. But politicians aren't bigging it, are they?

No, they're not. I wonder why, do you know why?

It doesn't suit their interests, does it? They just live, they just live for, for what they can get out each moment of power. You don't see people with a collective conscience about what we do.

No, no. And I wonder, I wonder where it went, if you know what I mean? I certainly get the impression that my parents, as you say talked a lot about ideas. And I think my generation, we're almost embarrassed to be passionate - as if it was naive. Um. And I think that's changing again, now. I think dispassion is, is hopefully giving way to it being okay to care again -it being cool to care again.

Yeah, yeah. Well, I think politics is - has had it almost, as it is now. I think that you know, because of this inequality - this big gap between the few that have got a lot, and the most of everybody else that is just getting by - some better than others. And I think it's not fit for purpose anymore, no doubt about it. It's only the crazed, 'biggy' people that are in the moment. There's nobody there any real thought, I mean, I was I was heartbroken when Obama left, because, you know, I felt that he was quite hopeful.

Yeah.

About a more thoughtful way through. But no, no, I think this is going to be the next big, big issue for people - not now but certainly in the next decade or two. No doubt about that.

Before we get totally off topic, is there anything else about Greenham that you would like to let me know?

No, I just want to say thank you to all of you for reintroducing it to us. It's been lovely.