

## Penny Gane

So there is one set question, which is not, it's not gonna be particularly surprising, I don't think, which is why do you think it's important that um, Greenham gets remembered by subsequent generations? You can have a think about it, come back to it later.

**It's, it's, it's, it's a piece of history. It's, I can't believe that it isn't in all the history books. I kind of assumed it was, until somebody told me that it wasn't particularly, and until I found myself doing a talk at the BBC last year for the centenary of women getting the vote. And I mentioned that I had been at Greenham common, and the person facilitating it said 'You're going to have to explain to these women, what Greenham common was', and I was really shocked. I thought everybody would learn about it, but they don't.**

No, they don't, and actually my experience is exactly that - when I mentioned the project to younger women, especially a lot of them have never even heard of Greenham common, which feels shocking.

**No. How shocking is that?**

Yeah. So tell us a little bit about, about how you got involved.

**Okay, so, um, so my role was very much Bristol based. I was um, a teacher at the time. And so I couldn't live there all the time. Believe me, I would have done! I did, I decided that I needed to hang on to my job. And also for quite a lot of the time that I was active, I was also pregnant with my first child. Um, so wasn't really practicable to just take off and, you know, give up the job and go and live there and be pregnant- that didn't seem sensible, really. So I kind of did the next best thing. And I mean, Bristol, you know, is full of strong women who want to get active in these things, and there was so much support for Greenham in Bristol. And so I would say two or three of us organised the Bristol Greenham**

**Women's Support Group. And so I had a coordinating role in that. And the group was about two hundred strong.**

Wow.

**So that was just the number of people who turned up to meetings. But but actually far more than that were involved in the whole Greenham effort. And um, on one occasion, I think it was the hands around base session. We actually got fifty one coaches of women from Bristol...**

Wow!

**...up to Greenham, which is considerable.**

Yes.

**And just shows that the level of support that there was here.**

Yeah.

**So we did things like we raised money for the, for the Greenham women. Some of us went up almost every weekend to - we did night shifts there, because you know, to give the women a break. I personally spent a lot of time at Green Gate. Also Blue Gate, and then at Yellow Gate. So um, so you know, we went went to different places, met different women, were able to kind of help out, keep the night fires burning and that sort of thing. We also help we went up to accompany women going to court, and to give them support and so on. We also (laughs) did a lot of lying in the road. (Laughs).**

(Laughs). Common theme!

**Yes. We stencilled on the motorway bridges on the M32 and the M4.**

Wow!

We, we used to go out and demonstrate on the motorways, telling people that this is where the missiles would be coming. And I used to carry in my car, in my little 2CV, I used to carry my banner, and sometimes on my way to work (laughs), of a morning, a handful of us would go out and wreak havoc on, you know, on the motorway, or one of one of the roads around Bristol, um with various um, slogans that we had. We also did a demonstration in Bristol, where we stopped all the traffic in Bristol until we got moved on that. That was a good one. You name it, really, we did it. You know, and back in the day, we had a wonderful banner that we used to march behind. And I don't know what's happened to that. Somebody made that, and it was glorious. On the on the days when we went up to Greenham when there were loads of us, we would all stop off at er, Reading Services on the way, and then we would take over both lots of toilets - the men's and the women's. There were so many of us - there wasn't anybody to come... you know! (Laughs).

No! (Laughs). Yeah.

So, huge effort actually, and we made loads of money and and gave it - you know, we sponsored various women up there so that they could stay there. And was that kind of activity really, but I mean, I was just saying to Sarah that I was there when Joan Baez came, and I have photos of that.

Oh gosh, oh how lovely.

Now that's a piece of history all on its own - Joan Baez coming to Greenham common, I've got another one somewhere. And what was so extraordinary about that, you, you've got to realise after a while, that the women who were there all the time had become really quite swarthy, and quite dark skinned, you know, outdoor living, you know. And then, and then Joan Baez turned up and she had this white roll neck jumper on, and her face looked kind of gorgeous, and she stood out like this hugely clean woman. Everybody else, you know - she was massively warmly welcomed. And I think when you when you've got Joan Baez

turning up, and you know, and we all sang, of course we sang and sang, because we did that all the time. That really did feel like a piece of history. I thought, well, when Joan Baez comes to your protest movement, that just really made it. It was hugely exciting, and gave the women a real boost.

Yeah, I'm sure it did. I - one of the things that struck me with everybody I've spoken to is how much um, spin off is the wrong word, but how much independent action happened both to support Greenham and also just like additional protests.

**Yeah. At the same time.**

That's right.

That were going on. So, so what we had in Bristol, because the idea was that whenever um, a convoy came out, we would take to the roads and you know, do our bit to stop them coming up. So what I've got here, are the four phone trees and...

Lovely.

I know! And then we would, we would - person in the middle would ring around them, the people in the ring around them and then they would ring those people and then, because we didn't have mobile phones, you know, this was the 1980s. And so that was what we did. And you can see we've got hundreds of names on there of people that when I look at it now, I still know some of these people.

Yeah. Amazing.

**Yeah. And it was a good system. You know, it was in its own way. It was quite efficient and it worked. There was the time I slept through a phone call. That wasn't great. (Laughs).**

These things happen, these things happen.

**But my phone in my house, my landline, it never stopped ringing that year that I was really heavily involved. It rang and rang and rang. So all evening I would be answering queries from women wanting to know, you know, how to get there, or where to go, or which gate to go to, or when was a good time, all sorts of things like that. And there was so much support in Bristol, it was - really made me proud, actually.**

I mean, I didn't realise quite the scale of it, actually - and I spoke to at least - I will take your photograph of this if that's alright?

**Okay. Yes.**

And I spoke to at least one other woman who said that initially, er, sort of when they first were coming through, CND were not very supportive, and it took a, took a sort of as sort of separate women's initiative to get things going, and get support going and go and join. I don't know whether you found that, or how you found out about it in the first place?

**I don't know how I found out about it in the first, I just kind of took an interest in it. Yeah. You know, there was a bit of lawlessness going on! (Laughs).**

Spotted it a mile off, thought I'd join in! (Laughs)

**(Laughs). That sounds like something for me. (Laughs).**

And again, it feels like there wasn't a lot of central organisation, you know, within, within the camps, you know, they were often very sort of nebulous.

**Yeah.**

But connected. But the amount of organisation that went on around it and an individual protesters phenomenal, actually.

**Yeah. But wasn't it interesting the way the different gates had kind of different, almost different functions?**

**Yes. Having been at three, do tell me what they were all like. You can't remember which one was which? (Laughs).**

**No I can't. Well, Yellow was the main gate, I just remember that. And that's where most of the action actually took place. And so if you spent a couple of days at Yellow Gate, you would, you would see horrendous sites - you would see women dropped on their heads, for example, by police. The police were incredibly brutal. I'd never seen anything like it. You know, I thought the police were there to kind of protect us. (Laughs). And turns out, you know, they're not always. The, I think the real thing for me about Greenham was that the - everybody, the it was the police really - the Metropolitan Police, they couldn't stand that women were standing up to them. They could not bear it, they couldn't tolerate it at all. And so they tried to stamp it out, stamp and stamp it out all the time. And then one night, I was on duty at Yellow Gate, and we had a little bonfire, keep us warm in the night, and, and then the police turned up - a couple of big bruises, with fire extinguishers and proceeded to sort of go crazy over putting this little fire out - loads and loads of fire extinguisher action going on, and all that. And and I got really narky with them. And the other woman said to me 'No, don't you know, don't, don't waste your energy. It's fine. We'll just sit here,' because it was after all a peaceful protest. And so I shut up, and did what I was told. And the police did that. And then they kind of harrumphed and went off again. And then we waited a bit. And then the women just relit the fire. And it always relit.**

**Really?**

**(Laughs). Now, you tell me - I don't know how fire extinguishers work. And I suppose we must have put new wood on it, on the top of it and everything - but that fire never went out. And they repeated that through the night, they would come back, do it all over again - because it was driving them nuts that we still had this fire! (Laughs). They would**

come back, and there it was, again. You know and so this was this little cat and mouse game that they played all night with the women - completely pointless. And the women always won, they always won. Everything they did, they won. They were so creative, you know, and so, so spirited and clever.

The amount of stamina it must take - emotional and mental stamina to, to continuously stay.

I know. And just keep going through all of that, I mean, it beggars belief, really. I know one day, when we were up there, there was a - suddenly there was this huge waste truck, you know, one of the like, refuse vehicles that - and it was from Bristol, and a load of kind of redneck blokes in it, you know, real kind of cowboy blokes. And they drove this thing at speed through all the women's benders and things you know, and if, if anybody had been in them at that time of day, they would have been killed. And I don't know how people weren't killed and injured. But, but you know, so that was the other side of what Bristol was doing - was kind of sending up like, you know, yobbie, horrible cowboy men having a go at women. And I've remembered that.

I'm not surprised.

**And I'll tell you a story. (Laughs).**

(Laughs). By all means. It does seem to be a common theme that men are very threatened by women not doing what they're told. I mean, is it as basic as that?

Yeah, I think it is. I think it kind of - it brings out the worst kind of misogyny in them, and somehow they find that terribly threatening, and especially when it's women en mass. You know, we we find this in all sorts of walks of life, don't we?

Yes, we do.

**I think I found it just now!**

Yes! I should imagine you did, absolutely. And were there men involved in the support group? Or was it women only as well?

**No, it was completely women.**

Yeah.

**And I suppose you know, when it started out from from Wales, and the men took that decision to go because they thought, I'm not sure if this was right or not that the police would perhaps be less thuggish, if the men weren't there. I'd be interested to know whether that actually became true or not.**

It's hard to tell. Because I think there's a lot of - in all the conversations I've had, there's some feeling that it would have been more violent, had there been men there because of the retaliation, and the license to be violent with other men. Equally, it doesn't mean that the women were not recipients for quite brutal behaviour. So it's hard to know objectively, I think it varies with people's experience. And the police as you witnessed...

**They were brutal with the women. Yes. Yeah, they were.**

I guess not being fought back means maybe it doesn't escalate, I guess. But passivity can be infuriating to people as well.

**I think so, I think so - I think they find that absolutely infuriating that you sit there, and or that you go limp or...**

It's very disempowering, somebody not reacting to you.

**Yes. I mean there were rumours that women were covering themselves in menstrual blood. I never had any evidence of that.**

Yes, I've heard that. A friend of mine is married to a soldier, who is convinced that they were throwing sanitary towels at soldiers. And all sorts of stuff. And I, but I, I have not heard firsthand from anyone that this was actually going.

**No, I mean, that might have just been a sort of an attempt to...**

A literal smear campaign! (Laughs).

**Yes, I was gonna say smear and then I thought I wouldn't! (Laughs).**

(Laughs). Sorry. Don't mean to bring the tone down! But yes, you don't know what's propaganda, and what's true, I suppose.

**No, and I mean, you know, fair play to them, it's quite a creative response! (Laughs). When you're a bit desperate, that's the kind of thing you would do.**

Absolutely. So, when you were there the weekends, did you stay over always?

**Yes. Yeah. And then and then we would have to drive back to work on Monday morning. And I remember one Monday, two of us we, we just had to pull off the motorway into a sort of side thing, and go to sleep because we were so exhausted. We were dangerous. We were gonna fall asleep driving, you know, it was it was always exhausting at Greenham. Very, very, very tiring. And you know, and I wasn't there full time. So I just - amazing to those women who were.**

So how did you cope with being pregnant and working full time?

**Yeah, well.**

And going away every weekend and protesting.

**Yeah, I think it kind of kept me going - really these things do. There was so much impetus behind it, and there were so many people in Bristol that needed to be coordinated. (Laughs). It's sort of, it's kind of something that I do, really. So it was, it was exciting. It was hugely exciting - I mean I say that, but it was really, really important. It was important that we won this.**

Yeah.

**And so we weren't gonna give up on it.**

Do you feel you did win?

**It's a question we ask ourselves. I like to think that we were completely and utterly responsible for those missiles leaving. (Laughs).**

(Laughs). I think you can take that one, that's fine. I'm not going to argue with that! It can't have had no impact, it's impossible that it had no impact.

**It must have done, and had impact all across the world really didn't it. We were getting messages from women all across the world. We didn't have social media, so it made it more difficult. And I used to edit the Greenham common newsletter. So a small group of us would meet at my house, and collect together all the available information that people used to send me articles and things.**

Yeah.

**And then you see, we didn't have printing we, you know, I mean, honestly, it sounds, I feel like I'm about 100 or something! In the old days where we didn't have printers and things. So we had to write this stuff by hand on it and use a Gestetner machine to duplicate it.**

Believe it or not I've used a Gestetner, they do still have them in schools.

**They're awful, aren't they? Do they?**

Yes, they do.

**Good grief!**

Not all schools. Some schools have still got Gestetners.

**God. So this Gestetner was in my bedroom, I seemed remember.**

(Laughs). Where did you sleep?!

**Next to it! (Laughs).**

Wow!

**And then we would kind of get to with this thing and, and I can remember - I can't remember where I was - selling them somewhere for 10p, with a load of other people who were selling all sorts of other stuff. And Ken Livingstone came along, and he wasn't gonna buy anything from anyone and then he spotted the Greenham common newsletter and bought one. So that was like a little victory, really. You know, like, I've got the only really good thing along here.**

Yeah! (Laughs).

**This is worth having. So we did that. We did that for a while. And that was all right until there was an argument around censorship, and then but it was a problem because you literally couldn't print everything that came your way, because we were just a small group of women, we didn't have the time or the resources to keep going. So we just did our best. And then if your article didn't get in, people felt like it had been censored, which was difficult, 'cause it would have got probably into the next one. But you know there were all these kind of, there were all these issues that we would always be discussing. So none of this was easy or straightforward.**

No, no, it can't have been.

**You know, as as some women struggles are not easy and straightforward. And indeed, we continue now, you know, having many discussions around a whole variety of issues and you know, but back in, back in Greenham, I think things were clarified in that we had a kind of common purpose, really.**

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. It seems that way. I mean, the organisation kind of fascinates me - that sort of how do you make decisions when there is no clear hierarchy.

**Yeah. Yeah.**

And, how how did you organise the support group? Did you - was it purely whoever wanted to, could just do things? Or were, did there end up being a committee process or organisation?

**No, I think we were pretty good. I mean, we attempted not to be to teacherly - because that that's always an issue really, isn't it - when you just want to give out handouts and say 'Right, this is what we're doing.' (Laughs).**

Yes. Yeah! (Laughs).

**So, so we, we didn't do that. But we- I thought we very good at reaching consensus. Very good. I mean, it's a lot of people - 200, to reach consensus on things but, but we did it. And, and somehow, yes, it was - I don't remember it being a difficult thing to organise, actually, at all. We met in a Quaker meeting place, and they were pleased to have us.**

Yes, there seems to have been a lot of Quakers involved all the way through.

**Yes, that is true. There were. And we were wonderful mixture of ages**

and, and sort of kinds of women. We were, yeah, it was a great group of actually, and I thought we all got on pretty well, to be honest. We did have some fiery arguments as well. We did some fiery arguments.

What did they tend to be about them? Arguments?

Well...

By all means, say whatever you feel comfortable saying. That's fine.

I'll tell you this, but we may take it out.

Okay.

So what happened to our support group in the end, what brought it to its knees. Was that there was a woman who we were sponsoring at Greenham common - when I say we were sponsoring, this was a very loose arrangement. We would sometimes give her some money, and we sometimes give other people some money. We didn't you know, whatever. And anyway, she decided that she was going to leave her family and her four children, and live at Greenham common. And you know, that was going to be her life from from then on. And there were women in the group who didn't want to give funds to someone who was leaving their four children. And that was difficult. And then she came down and told us all off and said 'That's not fair. You've said you'll sponsored me, and I want to stay there all the time.' People say 'Well, actually we've never committed to anything, but we and we have committed to some other women as well. And really, we don't feel good about this.' So then she said we were being judgmental. Err. And it was a tricky one. And, and then we got taken to task by Wages for Housework / err, what are they called English Collective of Prostitutes, and they told us that we were being judgmental as well. And basically, I would say it was them that ended up splitting the group. And, and that was a sad day, actually. And I don't know what happened after that, really. You know, some of us kept in touch with each other. There was

**a little group of women, who to this day, meet, calling themselves the Greenham Support Group, which I love.**

Lovely!

**(Laughs). Yes, that's right.**

That's really nice.

**Some women have died. You know, so it kind of came to a sad end really. But...**

Do you think there is a sort of time, a natural timeframe or natural size for things? I guess it's very hard to make permanent organisations?

**Well, um, maybe for that, maybe for that kind of initiative, it would have been really hard to keep going. And I mean, if the missiles were still there, would we still be there? You know, I can't, I can't believe that 30 years later, you know...**

That's the first time someone's said that, and actually it's a really good point - at what point would you...

**Surely we would have said, we can't, you know, this is not sustainable. But after it had all gone, I got sent to Greenham common by my dentist. (Laughs).**

What for? (Laughs).

**It was the most bizarre thing. I was having a crown fitted or something and he said 'Well, I need you to go and get a colour match. And the technical lab is at Greenham common.' I said 'What?' He said 'Yeah, it's at Greenham common. So could you go there?' And I said 'Yes, I of-course I'll go, back there, I'd love to.' So I drove there and went straight in at Yellow Gate. No bolt cutters, nothing - just drove in. (Laughs). You know.**

(Laughs) Really?

**Yes.**

There's a technical lab?

**Yes.**

A dental technical lab?

**Yes, there's all sorts of things there, now. There's no soldiers there, just just odd businesses that are set up in this weird place, that still had the fencing surrounding it.**

Yeah.

**But there was nothing else - no military presence. But outside of the gate was a caravan, and there were two women still living there.**

When was that? Roughly, not exactly.

**I honestly can't remember, but it wouldn't have been, like, ages after Greenham common, but I think it was a couple of years.**

I think there was a presence there up until the mid to late '90s.

**Right. Well, it must have been some time then, mustn't it? And I did ask about the women in the caravan. And they said basically 'Well, we don't think they've got anywhere else to live.' Which may have been true, because people did give up, really their homes to go and live there. And it's a bit of a desperate place to be.**

Yeah. Yes.

**I didn't actually see the women - I would have liked to. I would liked to talk to them.**

Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. See what they were up to.

**And then of course we wanted a statue outside the base, and apparently that's - all sorts of things have happened, and then they've been vandalised, or never happened, or whatever. And that hasn't been possible for some reason. And that's a shame. Because that should be marked. It shouldn't be marked in some way. Perhaps we could erect one in Newbury or Reading or somewhere. I wonder what - Newbury probably has very mixed feelings about it, doesn't it?**

Yeah, it seems to be that it wasn't very welcoming.

**No, I can see....**

(Inaudible)

**I do know somebody who used to let their house be used, so the woman could go and have a bath, things like that. But it never went down well with the neighbours. You know, they used to get a lot of abuse if they did things like that.**

It is amazing this sort of strength feeling against women just in general in Newbury and the surrounding areas.

**Really?**

Yes. I spoke to a woman who lived at the camp for a while and said you just got spat out every time you went to town, you'd come back and your back would be covered with gob.

**God, disgusting.**

It is disgusting, I have to say.

**There's us, that's us stopping the the traffic in the road. Police. Can you see me? That's me just behind that - with my Greenham banner.**

Wow.

**Don't I look young! Can you see my face? (Laughs).**

I can see your hair, which is wonderful! (Laughs).

**We were blocking Newfoundland Road in Bristol, carrying placards and a banner.**

Yeah.

**Police were quickly on the scene! (Laughs).**

I bet they were, I bet they were.

**Yeah.**

Do you think women are likely to organise in those sorts of numbers today about anything? Or do you feel we're a little bit disarmed?

**Well, there was that amazing women's march against Trump, wasn't there?**

Yes.

**Which is the sort of thing where women really do come together.**

Yeah. That's true.

**Did you, by any chance, see or take part in our extraordinary lantern parade out here?**

No, I didn't. I did know it was happening, but I wasn't able to, which was such a shame.

**It was quite one of the most wonderful days of my life.**

Really?

**It was amazing. About four thousand women.**

Really, that many?

**Yes. With these huge lanterns with slogans on, and those massive Suffragette puppets walking around, striding amongst us, and then the hundred girls singing and the brass band called Burning Brass that we have, you know, it was amazing. So yeah, women do come together, and they you know, and they do do things, but we haven't had occasion, fortunately, to have to set up camp around a military base. Not for a while, now. (Laughs). But if such a thing were to exist, I think we would all do it again. Yeah, quite sure of that. Definitely we would.**

I hope so. Be good if we did. (Laughs). I'm glad we're not so terrified as we were back then.

**Yeah. Yes. It was frightening times actually, very frightening.**

Was there a point where the fear lifted, or was that when the Cold War ended?

**Yes. I don't think it lifted until the Cold War ended. I think, I think we're all very frightened again now though, not quite, perhaps not quite the same way. But you know, the world's a very dangerous place now. And women's rights, if anything are going backwards. Um. We've got a lot of work to do.**

Yes. I feel like that.

**And that's what I am doing. (Laughs).**

It is what you are doing. Did it change the course of your life, do you think? You're not a teacher anymore?

**No, no, I haven't been a teacher for a long time.**

Was it anything to do with Greenham?

**(Laughs). No.**

(Laughs). Or was that just to do with education?

**No, no, that was, that was all to do with not being allowed to go back to my job as part time or a job share, because you couldn't basically, or at least, we could have but my head wouldn't countenance that, and didn't even know there were two of us. So yeah, it's all around women's rights, of-course. But fortunately, I've been able to be involved in women's rights ever since.**

Yeah, so were you were an activist prior to Greenham? Or did it make you an activist?

**Well, of-course I've been around a long time. So I, you know, one of the first things when I was at university, so what was that? Late '60s, early '70s, was when women's liberation was just beginning. So yes, I went to all those conferences. I was in, I was yeah, I was involved in all of that. Seems extraordinary, really, that in many ways, we're fighting those same battles all over again. And then, as a teacher, I was involved in trying to get er, school materials to be less sexist. And so I set up a group within my school called (laughs), this went down well, it was called something like the Anti-Sexism Group (laughs), which our head teacher really hated and tried to stop. But, but you know, because we used to write all our own materials, we were actually able to, you know, to have some influence on that. And then we got the director of education along, we did quite a lot of work with the education**

department and that sort of thing. So yeah, I've always been active. But it was only since, since for the last 20 years, I've been working in - I set up a company with another woman, and as an equalities and human rights consultant, and then I was able to do a lot of work in equalities, and as much as possible in gender. So and then, as you know, I've been running Bristol Women's Voice for 7 years now. And Bristol Women's Commission for 5 years. We've just celebrated our 5 year anniversary so, and that's been a fantastic experience for me.

Yeah, yeah. Oh, well done. (Laughs).

**Thank you.**

I'm glad you're doing it.

**Thank you for saying that! (Laughs).**

It's true, it's an amazing amount of stuff to be achieved. And I know, I suppose the reason I ask these questions is because I guess for some women it was their first experience of activism, or of standing you know, of being involved in overtly political action.

**Yes.**

Whereas it sounds like you were already well on the way before Greenham came along.

**Well, yeah, but I but I don't think I've sort of, I mean, I had joined in demonstrations and done things like that. And I'd been to some very active kind of conferences and things like that, but, but it wasn't really until Greenham - I'll probably remember something else in a minute. But I mean, like, you know, things like running a girls' football team, for example, when I was a teacher, you know, there wasn't any such thing as this girls' football, and that kind of thing. So, but, but that's not the same as sitting down in in the road, or daubing motorway bridges, or you know, and it was, it was only Greenham, it was only really at Greenham**

**that I sort of totally got into that side of things. Because it felt necessary. It wasn't just fun, this was this was serious stuff, really.**

Absolutely imperative that people acted in the way they did.

**Yes. Absolutely. And we couldn't find any other way to do it. I mean, it is a bit like the Suffragettes, you know, who had to resort to kind of burning places down, and smashing glass and all the rest of it. And I don't suppose for 1 minute they they did it from choice. And look what they went through with, you know, the force feeding and brutality from the police, which, you know, doesn't seem to change.**

No.

**And you know, and that was the right to vote. So, when things are really, really important, this is what women do, and it's what we have to do.**

Do you think there'll be a rehabilitation eventually, like there has been with the Suffragettes, in terms of public opinion or standing?

**That's a really difficult question. I don't know. I don't know what the public perception of the Greenham women is. They probably just think it was women covered in menstrual blood. You know! (Laughs).**

Unfortunately that may be true, if they'd heard of them at all! (Laughs).

**Yes.**

I think they were either there, or disapproving, it seems to be.

**Yes. Oh, right.**

So many women were there.

**Well, well, when we used to go there for the very big events, I used to see friends from Southampton and Gloucester, and Norfolk, and it was, it was just truly amazing. It felt like everybody was there, really. It was extraordinary.**

And in the group, in the Bristol support group, in terms of supporting women who were up in court, what did kind of that entail? Was there a lot of...

**Well, there were a couple of women who were had some sort of legal background and were able to actually offer a bit of legal support. But more than that, really, it was um, just being there with them. And encouraging them, you know, to - that it would all be alright. And actually, it was alright, really. Yeah, I mean, I'm just trying to think but I don't remember women - I may be wrong - were they locked up?**

There were, there were women locked up, normally for short amounts of time.

**Yeah. I mean, none of the women that we met were, it was all just dismissed.**

Yeah, a lot of cases were just dismissed. Yeah, they did send women to jail, especially in some of the bigger actions.

**Okay. In that case, I didn't say that! (Laughs).**

It's fine, we can edit it out! (Laughs). No, but I think you know, it depends where, and different different parts of the country things went differently. I think in general it was for persistent, the same people a lot of times...

**Oh I see, yeah.**

Were you ever arrested?

**No.**

Very sensible, you were a teacher. (Laughs).

**Probably. Well, I mean, I, I don't know how much that would have bothered me, really. Would I have been sacked?**

I don't know. Bizarrely enough, at least two of the other women I've interviewed are also teachers, and I think at least for one of them to be arrested was...

**Yeah, I think, I think it felt important probably not to be arrested. It didn't seem very sensible to be arrested. Generally, it isn't! (Laughs).**

No! It's avoided! (Laughs). I don't think it's like a badge of honour that you have to wear!

**No, not really.**

Yeah, it's one of those things that might happen, that probably is not something that should be...

**Yeah, but I mean, it could have happened. But, you know, it just doesn't, and that's because there was strength in numbers. There were always so many of us. And I suppose they would have picked on the ringleaders, really.**

...I think sometimes. What were the police like in Bristol when you were protesting here?

**Well, they didn't really understand it. They, they were like 'Why? Why are you doing this here? This isn't Greenham common.' (Laughs). You know, 'What's this got to do with you?' Kind of thing. So, and it was quite a difficult message to get across to people, that we should all be caring about this. But as I say the support from the women in Bristol was phenomenal.**

Yes, it sounds it.

**So, so the message was getting out, you know, but maybe only to the women.**

Yes. Yes! What were the press like? I can see you've got some press cuttings.

**Well, there's a few press cuttings, but then there's one where we were wrote a letter to the press, and all that got in of our letter, in the letters page was this tiny little thing that said 'Greenham women thank, thank the women of Bristol for the contribution that they've made, and the money they've given'. It was like three or four lines, and we'd written a whole letter about Greenham common - the press chose not to report on it. But of-course, the minute we took to the streets with our banners and so on 'Peace women block the road', you know, so there we were.**