

Jan

So, Jan, how did you come to be part of the peace movement?

Um, I'd been involved with the Peace Pledge Union, and CND since I was at school. And Greenham came along while I was a student, I was at university, and the local CND group in Stoke, which is where I was, where I was at college, decided to do a day visit down to Greenham to the peace camp. And it was the weekend of the big December demonstration in 1982. So there were, there were a lot of women went down from all parts of the country. And it was Embrace the Base. So it was just a really fantastic experience. So I'd kind of been involved a bit with the peace movement in general terms, before Greenham, and then that was kind of a trigger for me and I became much more active as a result of that experience, really.

And how did you hear about Greenham?

I knew about it, I knew about the Welsh women's march to Greenham through the, through the local CND group it'd just been something we've talked about, and it started off with oh - there's a bunch of women doing this, they're going to walk to this base for the day. And then we heard that they decided they were going to stay. And that was just a bit like, wow. That's just - decided to stay there. (Laughs). And so I think, you know, it was through that network it was through the peace network. But then of-course it got a bit, got in the press and the news started reporting it. And I suppose right at the beginning, it was quite benign reporting, it was just like, oh, haha, this bunch of crazy women are doing this. And isn't it sweet? And you know, give them a couple of days and they'll go home to their husbands and children. So there was you know, it was a very kind of low key and a bit of a joke almost to start with.

Yeah. And how did you travel there, and who did you go with?

**We went on a coach. And again, it was the local CND group and a women's group in Stoke, that had together, gotten together. So it was a big coach. I think it was about 46/48 seater, or something like that, a big one, and it was full. And then there were a couple of people took cars. So we had another, I don't know, maybe about six people travelled in cars as well, but I went on the coach.**

And how long were you there? Were you just there for Embrace the Base, or did you stay?

**No, that time we were just there for Embrace the Base, and most of us came back on the same day. So we went down on the Saturday for Embrace the Base. Most of us came back on the Saturday night, there were I think three or four people who just decided on the day oh, they were going to stay over, because there was a big thing going on on the Sunday, which was kind of base invasion.**

Yeah.

**Really, going over the fence. So some people stayed for that. And we did of-course, on that occasion, I think it was - might have been - I think it was then that we pushed the fence over. Can't remember - fence went over quite a few times! (Laughs).**

Yeah. And was Embrace the Base the first time you went down, and then you went back multiple times?

**Yeah. So I went down for that. And then, about a week later, I went and stayed a weekend. And I did that a couple of times. And then I stayed for I think about 6 months. Um. And then I 'cause I'd been a student, and I'd left the university by then. And so I think I stayed about 6 months and then I got a job. So I went, I went to go to work, which meant that from that point on for quite a few years, what I was doing was going down a weekend, so I used to go down on Friday night and come back on a Monday morning when I used to - when I took my holidays from work, I used to go and spend that my holiday time there.**

And what made you - what was the decision process that led to you saying I'm gonna stay for this amount of time?

**Not honestly sure there was one. To be fair, I think, um, I think initially, it was just like I want to go and spend some more time there. And I think when I stayed, it was just I'll stay another day or two, or just another few days. And then it became another week, and I'll stay a bit longer. And that was, you know, there might be something going on, an action that I'm interested in, or much later on, we started getting visits from women in, in other parts of the world. And that was like ooh, I'll just wait and see what they've got to say. You know, so, I don't think there was ever a plan. It was just a kind of day by day thing.**

And which gate were you at?

**Mostly Blue Gate. So I think the first time I went I stayed at Green Gate. And then I found Blue Gate, which was a, was a kind of Goddess gate, kind of Goddess spirituality and stuff. And, which suited me. And so yeah, most of the time that's - that I considered that to be my sort of home gate. Sometimes - some of the gates were really, really small and they had very few women. And they'd sometimes say 'Can we have volunteers?' Violet Gate, I remember was always really small, and Indigo Gate - I think Indigo Gate was the one that was in the woods. So it was quite vulnerable, and it got abandoned after a while, because there were some, you know, there were, quite often there were attacks on women, by local people. So they were, they were quite vulnerable, some of them.**

Yeah. And was that decision that led you to stay at that gate - it just suited who you were, and your personality?

**Yeah. Yeah.**

And did you - and so from what we've spoken to other women about, each gate kind of had their distinct personalities. Did that come across to you quite clearly when you were there as well?

**Um, not immediately, I think there were - there were certain things that were really clear. So Main Gate - Yellow Gate was obviously the kind of focal point for a lot of demonstrations, a lot of actions because it was where most of the vehicles were going in and out. It's where a lot of the road blockages took place. And a lot of it would have been the original site, I think so a lot of people kind of differed a bit to Yellow Gate. And a lot of the people who were very involved in the organisation of things were based there. Green Gate was, was where the sanctuary was. So there was some safety there - we had permission from a land owner to use a certain piece of land to put stuff in, um, like supplies and tents and stuff like that. So that was a, that was a nature gate, really. And it was very much around kind of the natural world and kind of stuff. As I said Blue Gate was a goddess gate. I'm not really sure about the others to be honest. Um. And some of them kind of came and went a little bit. They weren't established all of the time.**

Yeah. And did you make friends when you were there - obviously you were there for 6 months?

**Yes.**

And kind of meet people. And did those networks continue after you left Greenham, or were they more specific to your time there?

**They were, they were specific.**

Yeah.

**One or two people I stayed in touch with for quite a long time afterwards. But no, mostly it was mostly specific. It was around Greenham, it was around activity linked to that, and supporting women**

**who were imprisoned because of Greenham, or because of the wider peace movement.**

Yeah. And what did it mean that Greenham - what did it mean for you that Greenham was a woman only space?

**For me, that was the point of it, really, that was the whole point of it. It was kind of a different way of doing protests. Because a lot of the political activity that I'd been involved in before was very dominated by men, and men's kind of ideology about how you do political activity. And so it was you know, kind of, as a young person, been involved with the Socialist Workers' Party, and a lot of that was about political activity, political activity, where we might do that. And it was you know, you'd have these like endless meetings in people's flats and and it would all be great, and then it'd be like 'Ooh, shall we have a cup of tea?' And all of the men in the room would stare at the one or two women who were there, and it's like, you know 'Go put the kettle on, love'. So, you know, I'm talking about the kind of late 1970s. Um, so this was different it was, it was kind of whole refreshing thing about, oh, wow, women can just do this stuff on their own. And a sense of power, but also playfulness and humour, and you know, it wasn't too po-faced.**

And has that kind of, after you left, Greenham - have you then taken forward the idea that you prefer women only spaces, and champion them and things like that, or is it just something you use?

**I still do. I mean, I, you know, I'm a lesbian and have, you know, have been openly out since I was about 15. And I've lived like that - my partner and I got married at Greenham.**

Did you meet at Greenham?

**We didn't. No, we met through work. But we'd both independently been involved with things at Greenham, so then it was like, oh, okay, well, we'll go together then. So we started going together to Greenham and then we decided that we were going to get married. And of-course, it wasn't**

legal there was no legal marriage in those days. So it was, it was just going to be, you know for us, really. So we organised this marriage ceremony, a hand-fasting and, you know, a bit of singing and stuff at Blue Gate in 1985. And we got a friend of ours to officiate, and word kind of spread. And on the day we were supposed to be going down - we lived in Walsall then, in the Midlands, we were supposed to go down on a coach with a whole bunch of people who would coming for our wedding. And we slept in and missed the coach. (Laughs). So we were thinking, h, should we not bother then? Well, we can't - we've invited all these people! So we drove down - we got down to Greenham, we got to Blue Gate, and Marian who was officiating said 'I'm ever so glad you've got here - all these people have been turning up. Going we hear there's a wedding - there's going to be a wedding!' So I think we had about, I don't know, it was, it was a day of a big demonstration. I think we had about 3000 women at our wedding, and it was just fantastic. You know, it was really funny and years later, I would meet people who said 'You know, I was at Greenham. I remember one time these two women got married at Blue Gate.' And I'd be going 'Yeah, it's me! Me and Chris!'

That's incredible! And oh - that's such a gorgeous story. And, and in terms of non-violent direct action, how did you feel that worked for you? And how did, if you did use it, how did you use it when you were at Greenham?

Um. So I believe, and I continue to believe it is the only way that you, that you can do protests - peaceful protest is the only way you can do it. And and we're still - I'm still doing it. So I don't know whether you know, but in Sheffield there has been a big campaign about them cutting the trees down. Council have got a private company cutting down these 100 year old trees because money - to save money. So we weren't going to let that happen. And so there was a huge campaign out here - when we moved here actually just about 14 months ago, of NVDA people standing under the trees, and standing around the trees, and people climbing into the trees and stuff. So of-course, we had to join in with that because you can't have these things going on. Right under your nose without being a part of it! So yeah, we got here in the

November and we'd been here about fortnight when we started joining in with that stuff. We didn't unpack until January! (Laughs). But yes, I mean, to me, the whole, the whole point about it is you are saying, I'm resisting you. But you can't, you can't allow for it to become violent or aggressive. Because, because they have more power than you. And you're gonna get damaged if you do that. But also, that's playing their game, and the whole point of it was about showing a different way of being in the world, I suppose. Like, the um, the fantastic thing we used to do with wool. So make webs around the fence and round ourselves. So we were all tied together. So when they came to pick us up and drag us away, we were all kind of attached to each other, and it just, it didn't slow them down much because they used to come along with their cutters, snip through it all and whatever, but it was just - it was symbolic as much as anything - to be different about how you are in the world.

And how did you feel that the men on the base reacted to those sorts of things that was going on - was it kind of bafflement at what was happening?

A lot of them were. A lot of them were American. A lot of the squaddies were American and they were young. And they were quite intimidated by some of it, I think. They didn't know how to deal with it. So they kind of veered between taunting and shouting abuse, and complaining about us, to being completely silent. At one point, I think they must have been told 'Don't interact with them.' Because sometimes it was quite friendly. You know, you would be having a dialogue about 'We're doing this because you know, and how you feel about what you're doing on your side of the fence? And how do you square that with, you know, being a decent human being?' And I think their people in charge didn't like them engaging with us in that kind of a way because obviously it led to them questioning, and losing their own communities and whatever. And some of the women squaddies were, were quite disturbed about the whole thing. And I know, at least to who jumped ship and came over the fence - joined us. So there was obviously concern about, you know, whether they might end up colluding with us, or agreeing with us or whatever. I mean, there would

have been very few, I think, that did that. But yeah, it was, it was different. And some of them were quite, you know, vindictive and unpleasant, and I wouldn't have wanted to meet them on our side of the fence. But most of them, yeah, they were just, young kids, really. Men, mostly men.

And what was your relationship with the local residents at Newbury, if any?

Oh, really variable. So there were what we call vigilante squads, which were young men from, from Newbury, who used to come and cause damage and menace to the women. There were some, some er, reports of women being raped, and attacked, particularly at the more isolated gates. And there was certainly things like throwing dog shit at us, and that kind of stuff, and coming around at night with flashlights and stuff like that. Um, there were people who disapproved of the camp. So if you were in the town, they would be sneery and you know, unpleasant. And there were other people who were very supportive of us and would, you know, would bring us things and just come and offer encouragement and the local, there was a local Quaker group who were just fantastic. And every week they would come, they'd bring hot food, they'd bring sleeping bags, they'd bring waterproof boots, and they used to come and hold a prayer vigil - like a silent vigil at Blue Gate every week. That really freaked out the squaddies. They absolutely hated it. Um. Because they didn't know what to do about it. (Laughs). But yeah, they were, they were lovely. They were just such lovely people. But, you know, some of the people who did weren't actively, you know, didn't come near the camp. The first time I went on my own, I went on the train and got off the train in Newbury. And I was kind of standing there with my rucksack looking a bit lost. And this, this guy came up to me and he said 'You look a bit lost, love.' And I said, in all innocence and naivety 'I'm looking for the Greenham common camp,' and he went 'Oh,' he said, 'I can give you a lift up there, if you like,' he said, 'Chuck your bag in the back and get in the car.' And I did. So here am I - I was about 22/23, something like 23 probably - getting in the car with this strange man I'd never met - elderly man who was a local resident, who might

have been completely anti the whole thing - dangerous. And he very cheerfully drove me up and dropped me off at Blue Gate and said 'I think this is the nearest gate for you love, you'll be fine there.' (Laughs). And it was just - when I think about it now, I think how naive and foolish, but actually, maybe he was more typical of a lot of the people who lived there. They, they might not have been enthusiastic about the camp, and there was such a lot of propaganda about what we were doing up there. And you know that we were wrecking the woods, and we were causing damage. And we were putting sanitary towels in the base and all sorts of things like that. There was all sorts of things being reported every week, most of which was rubbish. But a lot of people, that's all they would have seen, I guess, and would have just assumed - there was stuff about us being violent, and attacking squaddies, who would come back from leave to get in the base, you know, things like that. And it was just, it was the antithesis of what we were about, you know, anybody who'd bothered to come and look and talk to us would have known that that was just just nonsense.

Yeah. And did you - did the kind of media reaction - did that affect anybody on base - what people were saying - in the camp - what people were saying about?

Yeah, I think a lot of people were very distressed about it, and disturbed about it, and for quite a long time, tried to put out you know, answers to that. And then we realised there was no point, because you know, our letters that said 'Dear Sir, this is all rubbish, please come and, you know, see for yourself,' just never got published, and never got anywhere. So in the first days, I think that you know, the early years, there was quite a lot of anxiety, and upset about what was being said. And of-course, in the national press there were things being said, and then so people would go home and then they'd get this stuff parroted back to them. And then at one point, I can't remember when it was, at some point, there was like a news blackout of the things that were happening. So then nothing, nothing got into the press, nothing was ever said. And a lot of people thought the camp had closed and they've just gone home, because there was no more news (laughs), and that might have been

after the cruise missiles arrived. And we started going out and following them when they went on manoeuvres. We would track them and we follow them. And we had like a telephone tree. So people would ring each other - bearing in mind that we didn't have mobile phones and there was no internet. And we did a quite a good job, I think, of tracking where they went when they took the cruise missile out on manoeuvres, and we would follow them and we'd kind of be saying to local people, 'You do know what's driving through your village, don't you? You do know what they are and where they're going?'

And what would the reaction be from the people in the town when you said that to them?

I think most people didn't want to know. They didn't. You know, it's a bit like, it's a bit like with fracking now. You know, you can talk to local people about the risks of fracking and what the consequences for them might be, and it might be, it might be like at the end of their road, and you will still get people who say 'Well, it's, it's jobs and it's, you know, that's what matters and, you know, you're trying to halt progress.' And all that kind of - very similar kinds of arguments, really.

And so obviously Greenham represented very artistically, and lots of art going on at the camp. Was that something you were involved in? Or were you - did you see it happening around you?

Certainly saw it happening. I wasn't really involved in it myself. Um. I've never kind of thought of myself as an artistic person. (Laughs). But no, I know that a lot of it was happening. And some of that was about, about doing the political thing. Some of that was about artwork that went on the fence, or artwork that was used in the, in the posters and flyers and the kind of messaging out and stuff like that. Some of it was just for woman's own pleasure. And I think um, when you live like that - when you live in the mud, with not very much stuff, because when the evictions started, we couldn't really have anything. Because they just came and took it. And so really small things become significant. So making a little drawing and giving it to somebody, or um, you know,

making a daisy chain, or finding a really beautiful stone or something - things like that just had huge significance, because they were, they were just small things, but they were things that were of beauty, and they weren't about day to day you know, survival and whose turn is to go and dig the next shit pit! (Laughs). Glamorous! Who's gonna go get the water, you know!

Yeah. I was gonna ask you about the kind of domestic day to day life about it, which I appreciate is a very big question. But is it possible to kind of talk about what - not a typical day, but a day at Greenham would be like? From getting up, to going back to bed in the evening? And kind of like the conditions, and I appreciate it's different from season to season.

**It's completely different, depending on which period you're talking okay?**

Oh, okay.

**Um. Because that kind of - the day to day routine changed massively once the eviction started, because everything then became focused around when would they arrive? When would the bailiffs arrive? How long would they stay, and how many times would they come? So sometimes, they just came once a day. Sometimes they would come two or three times a day, so you'd - what, what would happen then, they usually came to Blue Gate first, and we saw them coming up the hill. So there'd be the muncher wagon which the bailiffs brought, and their van with them in, and then usually a couple of police cars with a police escort. And, and they would often come very early, so that might be how the day started. Somebody would start shouting 'Bailiffs, bailiffs, bailiffs.' And everybody else would scramble out of the bender and gather up whatever they could. And we had a van - a transit van or something like that at Blue Gate for a while, so people would throw as much as they could in the back of the van, and then somebody, and quite often it would be me because I could drive, would drive around the base in the van hooting the horn and yelling 'Bailiffs, bailiffs, bailiffs', at all of the other gates, to let them know that they were on their way. And**

so the day might start like that. Alternatively, if they came later in the morning, we might, we might be up and sitting around the fire. The fire was going all the time, and drinking cups of tea and waking up - that kind of thing. A lot of the time it was it, was doing chores - it was, it was washing up whatever we'd got, getting water - we had to go to Green Gate to get the water. Um, or digging or filling in shit pits, we seemed to spend a quite a lot of time doing that, especially if there was going to be a big demonstration, because you had to cater for visitors. (Laughs). Yeah, cooking, um, scrounging stuff - going and looking for polythene sheeting and stuff to make benders with - we didn't, after the evictions started - we didn't have, we didn't have structures, we gave up having tents and stuff like that, because you had to have something to take down quickly. And although they weren't supposed to take certain things - they weren't allowed to take bedding or clothing or food, they did - they just took whatever they could get their hands on. And the police used to just they turn around and look down the road. And then when you's say 'They're taking our clothes or they're taking our food', they'd say 'I haven't seen them'. So that, and they would manhandle women, quite roughly. And again, the police just never seemed to notice that that was going on. And that's it, you know, it's still like that now, it was still like that at the policing of the tree protest. You know, the police didn't see that this army of security guards they'd brought to deal with tree protestors were assaulting people. And you know that that, those inquiries are still going on. That, that very political use of the police which, you know, that goes along with what was going on with the miners' strike and Orgreave. And at the time, the police were being used in a way, I guess that they hadn't really been before - to reinforce a kind of political policy or direction.

I think now, with private security companies, it's almost they're washing the hands of that as well. So like 'Well, it wasn't us.' Which is a different thing, which is dark.

Yeah.

Quite scary, really.

**It was a different thing. And we didn't see it.**

Yes. Yeah.

**Yeah. And that's, you know, that's exactly what was going on with the bailiffs. The bailiffs were brought in and they were dismantling things, they were taking the food, they were taking - there was a really horrible incident, which I personally didn't see, I just heard about it, but I did meet the woman - where they'd picked somebody up and tried to - I don't know whether they seriously were trying to whether they would - just threatened to put her in the back of the muncher wagon. And in the process something happened - she had I don't know whether she was dropped or whatever, but but she broke her leg. And of-course, that was all around the camp then. And yeah, when I talked to her about it, she said she couldn't really remember very much about it because she was so frightened at the time about what was going to happen. But yeah, it was pretty horrendous.**

Yeah. And, and in terms of collective nature, decision making...

**(Sighs)**

(Laughs)...how did that work for you? How did you see it work? Did you take part in it - all those sorts of things.

**God it was boring! (Laughs).**

I've heard a lot about talking sticks.

**Oh yeah. Yeah. Um. I suppose when decisions were made within the gate, that was relatively straightforward, because there weren't that many people. I guess, in terms of regular people who were living at Blue Gate, or regular stayers, there was probably about 12/15 of us, maximum. Sometimes it was down to 3 or 4. So that was fairly straightforward. What I remember is arguments about if we were given**

money. Sometimes people gave money, not food or whatever. And arguments about what we should spend the money on, and whether we should spend the money on food, or booze, or weed. So that, that was probably about the biggest kind of discussion we had, and whether or not - one of the dogs got pregnant, and whether or not the dog should be allowed to give birth at the camp, or whether it would be safer if the dog went to stay on somebody's farm to give birth. So we had a big discussion about that. But the big decisions about the campaign, about the direction of the campaign, about whether or not we would endorse something or agree to something. Um, yeah, they were big meetings. They were usually either at Yellow Gate or Green Gate. They involved a lot of people. Yes, there was a talking stick. Not everybody obeyed the rules of the talking stick. And people had massively different views on things. And there were some things that were quite challenging. So, for example, there was a, there were quite a few women who had mental health problems staying at the camp, but there was one woman in particular, whose behaviour um, while it wasn't really impinging on other people, was quite seriously self damaging and, and women were really concerned that she was going to starve herself to death, because she'd effectively almost become catatonic. She wasn't responding to anything. She was just lying in her tent, and had been for, for a long time, a couple of weeks. And so people were really, really concerned about - it was increasingly difficult to get her to eat anything or drink anything. Um. And there was a huge, huge issue about whether or not somebody should contact mental health services and try and get somebody to come up and see her. And she, and the woman had been asked about this and had said very clearly, she didn't want anybody - she wasn't, you know, she'd been oppressed by mental health services and she'd been damaged by them, and she didn't want anything to do with them, and so there was a big debate about freewill, and whether somebody can exercise freewill if they are ill. And at what point does somebody else decide that they need to intervene? And, you know, it just, it was quite a serious issue. And because it was a serious issue, it was important, and it was interesting. And therefore, I didn't mind spending several hours sitting in the mud talking about that one. But sometimes they were just really, they were so - to my mind - they were

just so petty, I can't remember what they were about, you know, it was like, why are we talking about this? We've been talking about this for 3 hours. Why are we still talking about it? 'Cause it's really obvious, you know, at some point, we're not going to come to an agreement. If you try and do everything by agreement, then at some point, you're going to get stuck, because there are some people who just, you know, just will say 'I'm, I can't do that. I'm not doing that.' You know, there was a there was a discussion about - there was something we were going to do, I think an invasion of base - we were going to go in and sit on the silos, or sit inside somewhere. And at what point would we agree to leave? So would we agree when - when they asked us, because they didn't always know where we were there. Sometimes we had to attract attention to the fact that we were in their base, because they haven't noticed. So yeah, I think the dancing on the silos thing was one of those - it was like they'd gone in and sat in the silos and nobody noticed. So they'd have to stand up and start waving their arms about and shrieking and dancing. But it was um, you know, it was at what point will we leave? When they just come and say 'Come on, clear off.' You know, they usually started with - or do we wait until they tried to physically lift us and move us? Would we wait until we've been arrested? You know, there was a lot of - and women had different views about that. It's enough to show that we can go in there whenever we like. So all we need is for them to see us, notice us and ask us to leave and we'll leave. And other women were saying 'No, no, no, we have to make it hard for them. We have to show that we're determined. We have to wait until they physically drag us.' Other women were saying 'Well, I'm happy to be arrested. I'll be arrested. You know, you, you can do what you like. I'm going to stay until I'm arrested.' And there was a woman who just kept saying 'I'm not walking away from this. I'm not walking away.' (Laughs). We were saying 'You know, it doesn't make sense. Why are you going to get yourself arrested for this? You know, this is a beautiful thing. Wait until there's something really worth being arrested for'. 'I'm not walking away, I've walked away enough times, I'm not walking.' So yeah, it's just um, and some, you know, after 3 or 4 hours of kind of having this conversation going round and round and round, I was just thinking,

well, let her bloody stay! You know, we'll go when we've had enough - let her stay! My god! So yeah, I don't think it was it was always - I don't think it was without conflict. I don't think that because, because women were working together, and were trying to establish ways together of doing things differently, I don't think it was always without conflict. Because I think, people bring different views with them.

Yeah, people are still people.

Yeah.

And do you think that there's anything for activism today to learn from the nature of which decisions were taken at Greenham, or have you seen it in action?

I think, I think it did make a difference in terms of activism, I don't know if it made a difference in terms of the presence of the missiles, if I'm really honest. In terms of the way people do political actions, I think you can see that now. Um, I can, I think you can see some of the creative responses now. Um, I think quite often you see the use of art. So in the tree thing here, I said it's kind of a really recent thing, but also in the anti fracking movement, a lot of kind of artistic ways of objecting and use, you know, visual arts and um, music, creation of music, creation of um, songs, and that there were, there was a lot of music at Greenham, a lot of songs, some of which we're still singing! Yeah, I think it did, I think it changed what people thought they could do. That kind of notion of establishing a camp, so you saw that kind of stuff with the Occupy movement. And you've seen that kind of with the fracking stuff. You've seen it with other environmental movements, the Newbury bypass one. And so, yeah, that that kind of, you know, just saying 'I'm staying here until this is ended, one way or the other.' And using those kinds of almost kind of engaging, funny, humorous, serious, but alongside humour, that's - I think that's changed things. And I think the idea of trying to do a two pronged approach, so you do the kind of political activism, lobbying, you know, engaging with people politically as well as the NVDA actions and the direct action.

And this is more about kind of the end of Greenham, how much do you think the camp was politically infiltrated or sabotage if at all?

Um, I wasn't there at the end. So I don't know. It was, it was infiltrated all the way along. There were, there were people who were infiltrators. I don't know how much, I don't know how that changed. I suppose I stopped going in about 1985/86, might be '87. So the last few years I didn't - I went occasionally, but I wasn't really involved with it then. So I don't really know, kind of how that happened, or what happened.

And kind of when you were there, did you see fractions emerging? Like, kind of conflicting ideas emerging? Or were they already there throughout the whole time, even though?

I think they were always there. I think there were always things, um there were some women who, for example, were really opposed to anything that was illegal. And there were other women who said 'If we don't do things - we disagree with the laws, and if we don't do things that are illegal, we're pointless.' There were women who were very clearly kind of from a Marxist point of view, politically and would argue those politics, there were some women there who were Tories, and, you know, had come from their local Women's Institute, and were very, you know, in the country set, who, who were only interested in the anti nuclear argument - they, over the time, I think their political interests became much broader. So it started - it was very clearly started off it was opposition to the establishment of nuclear weapons on British soil and particularly in airbase, and that was a real clear focus. And I think the, the women who started the camp, were really clear. That's why they were there. That's what they were opposed to. They didn't want these weapons being brought. And the first couple years were about that - it was about stopping those weapons coming in, then, of course, the weapons did come in. And the focus was about getting them out, and about trying to raise awareness of the threat and the danger that they they posed. But then, er, I guess we got involved or we got drawn, or some people brought with them interesting other things. So things like

animal rights, and things like spirituality and religion and that kind of stuff, um, nuclear testing. So there was a big alliance with Women from the Pacific, who were really kind of trying to raise awareness about the damage done by nuclear testing in the Pacific, and the threat to indigenous lands, and indigenous people. And so it kind of became quite broad. And a lot of people, a lot of people from other countries and from other causes came to Greenham to talk to us about what we were doing, and how we were doing it, and to try and learn, I suppose. Greenham women went to places - there was a bit of controversy about that, about who got to go, and who was allowed to be a spokesperson, and how come. There was a trip, there was a trip somewhere - can't remember where it was now. There was a trip somewhere - might have been Canada, and three Greenham women were going to go and there was fundraising to support them to go, and there was a bit of 'Well, how come they're the ones going and how come we never got a chance to go?', and you know, there was a bit of that kind of stuff, you know. So yeah, I think there were, I think there were - I'm not sure I would go so far as to say factions. There were people, there were groups of people, groups of women who were very particularly interested in certain things. There was a bit of an alliance with the Troops Out movement. There was a bit of an alliance with English Collection of Prostitutes around sex workers. So yeah, there was, you know, there were people who, who had particular focus, I suppose, um, I suspect most of them came with it. They didn't develop it while they were there. Yeah, we and there were a lot of women there who were um, on the run from something, on the run from violent partners, on the run from the care system, on the run from the mental health system. On the run from prison! (Laughs).

You've talked about this a little bit as well. But what do you feel is the legacy of Greenham within the peace movement or any other movement? So if that's the feminist movement, or the LGBTQ plus movement?

That's hard. Um. I think there are concrete things that you could say like the forms of protest, and the, the strategies and the tactics used, and the awareness of some of the er, ways in which the state tried to

crush the protest. Um. I think there's, there is a legacy that's about learning to live in that kind of collective way. Which by and large was very successful, despite everything that I've said about the arguments and the differences and the endless meetings. Um, it was a, it was a successful way of creating a community. Um, I think there's a legacy that's around um, don't know I almost want say, adding to the tradition of protest in this country. So Sheffield - I haven't lived in Sheffield very long, but Sheffield is kind of well known seat of radical behaviour. And they had a, there was an exhibition at one of the museums and last year, early last year sometime, and it was really interesting, the protests that were featured a lot had very strong connections with, with groups in Sheffield. And Greenham was one of those, and Women Against Pit Closures was one of those. And the tree protest movement was one of those. You know, it's kind of um - it's part of a tradition. I don't think it was - it didn't start that tradition. But I think it was an important stage in that, it's, it's recognised by a lot of people. Um, I'm surprised when people haven't heard about it. So um, the choir that we used to sing with in Birmingham, er, which is a socialist choir used to sing Carry Greenham Home as one of its songs. And one of the reasons they liked to sing it was because it always made me cry. And my, my brother and sister in law and daughter came to see one of the concerts, and afterwards when we were all sitting around singing somebody goes 'Oh, let's sing Carry Greenham Home, see if we can make Janet cry.' And er, Jodie who was, I think she was 16 at the time, said to my brother, 'Why would it make her cry?' And he says 'Well she was there', and she said 'What is it?'

Yeah.

And when he when he told me, I thought, gosh, she doesn't know - she doesn't know about it. And yet, it's part of you know, it's part of my life. It was a big part of my life. So I had to start instructing her! Say 'This is what it is. This is what it is!' And in a way, I think, interestingly, she's kind of become more interested in in modern day things, things that are happening now. So she's quite into Extinction Rebellion and that kind of stuff. But she'd never thought about those things until we had that

**conversation about Greenham. And I think about that now, I think that should have been part of her education.**

Yeah. I find it quite - I did a history degree. And a lot of my interest was in activism and women's history, even though women's history should just be history.

**Yes!**

It's kind of one room at the side. And I was - and kind of did the British state throughout the 20th century, and nothing about Greenham, nothing about these things. I don't know, part of me wonders if it's about how, because it was a women only thing, like and how, because of the way the media treated it, it didn't have the documentation required, like other movements did - like and also by not having a leader it doesn't fit into that traditional view of what a movement is.

**Yeah.**

If that makes sense. I find it staggering when I tell people that I'm doing this project, they're like 'Oh, what's that?' It wasn't that long ago. And was so important for women, and how we live and how we react to things, that I find it quite strange. Um hopefully this project will have help with that.

**Yes.**

And and yeah, my next question was, how do you feel that legacy has been relayed to future generations? So you've kind of already spoken a bit.

**Yeah, I mean, I think it isn't.**

Yeah.

And even though those of us who were, who were involved in it and, and I don't know. I guess there might be for some people, for some women who were there, I don't know if there were any who were there, right the way through and right to the end. Um, whether that's different, but certainly for me, um. I do, I do talk about it quite a lot. I do talk about it quite a lot to my peers. Um, I haven't talked about it very much with younger people. Although younger people who were involved in activism I have, so yeah, when I've gone to places and kind of been part of demonstrations and stuff like that. We went up to, we've been up to a few of the fracking camps. And I've talked about it there, talked about how have you organised this? And what are you doing about that? And how's that working out? (Laughs). 'We used to do that - found this was really helpful.'

Yeah, got a talking stick!

**Yeah! (Laughs). Oh yes, let me present you with a talking stick! (Laughs).**

Um yeah, the next question again, you kind of answered, what do you think would make a difference to kind of secure - securing the legacy seems this really kind of male obsession. And I'm kind of erring away from talking about it in that sense, but kind of creating more awareness about it, so that it does, it is more well known. Like we kind of know about the Suffragette movement and Suffragist movement, but Greenham seems kind of hidden in history. I just wondered if you thought there was anything that could be done?

**Um, well, we need an anniversary year, don't we!**

Yeah.

**We need a year's worth of - you know, I think there is quite a lot, you know, there's quite a lot known about the Suffragettes, and Chris is a real kind of Suffragette aficionado. So she's got a lot of stuff. But I think that's more recent.**

Yeah.

When I think about what did I learn about the Suffragette movement at school? It was about Emily Wilding Davison thrown herself under a horse. You know that was, that was pretty much it. And so yeah, I think there's, I think the fact that we've had an anniversary year has raised that whole kind of stuff, and every city has discovered that it had Suffragettes and has started to kind of celebrate them.

Yeah.

We almost need that kind of an anniversary year of Greenham, and a bit of a 'Do you remember this? Do you remember?' There's so, I think there's a little um, media archival material from a particular period because, because of the news blackout. It was a D-notice for me. There was you know, for a few years, there was nothing. There was stuff from the early period. There is The Guardian, Your Greenham page, which has got a lot of stuff on it, except that you'd have to look quite hard to find it. It's not something you kind of accidentally stumble across. So there's something for me that's about saying, there is stuff there. It's just not in the mainstream. It's not, it's not easy to find. And so we would need something that would be like a general kind of awareness raising - 'Do you know this happened?' and 'Did you know it went on for all of this time?' 'And did you know that there were all of these women involved in it?' And you know 'Did you have women from your town who went?', it's that kind of a, that kind of thing really. Maybe your project could kick it off.

Yeah, hopefully.

What would be a good year to do it? Er...I don't know, maybe 2020?

When did they first walk - 80...?

**Might have been '81 actually. '82 was the first really big demonstration, and that was in December. It might have been '82. I don't know when they first set out. I've got a feeling it was '81. But I can't be certain. If it was '81, could do it in 2021? Yes.**

Yeah, that's a plan!

**I think that's what we need. We need an anniversary. Big exhibitions in lots of places, not just in London, because most of won't go to London for something.**

Everybody's everywhere. So like we've - like we've discovered with this project, there are Greenham women everywhere.

**I had a badge that said that!**

Did you?

**Yeah, yeah. I've probably still got it. Greenham women are everywhere.**

Yeah.

**And I've got one from the 10,000 women for 10 days um, event. Yeah, I've still got stuff. I've still got the original, the original poster for the Embrace the Base demonstration.**

I think there's just a wealth of not only memories, but memorabilia and stuff that, yeah, like we found in archives, that's just ignored. And yeah, bringing it all together would be a brilliant thing to do.

**Try a travelling exhibition.**

Yeah.

**There's something about, there's something about making things and doing things in real life that reaches people that online stuff never does.**

So in Birmingham um, for, I can't remember what they, want the occasion once, some - don't know whether it was a protest exhibition or something, but they showed the Greenham film - Carry Greenham Home film, which was from very early, right at the beginning. And they had a bit of an exhibition of memorabilia and stuff like that. And so many women came - I went three or four times, and there were always women there saying 'I remember this, and I had one of those', and, you know, and it was lovely. But also they were bringing their grandchildren. And that for me - that question you said about younger people. It's like they've got something to show them. Like you know, there were photographs there. And there were posters, some of the original posters. So yeah, there is stuff around, it's just, it's just - what's the word? Curating it.

Yeah. My next question is about children. But it's more about if you saw or interacted with any children at the camp? And how, if you, if you did, how they were treated - if they were, because the stories that we've heard is kind of yeah, they had a great time, and what an amazing thing to kind of grow up with. And when talking Women Against Pit Camp Closures, they were saying the kids loved it, and some of their children's earliest memories are of being there and having a great time. I just wondered if...

Um, there weren't any children living at Blue Gate. Lots of dogs and lots of cats, no children! I came into kind of passing contact with children at Yellow Gate and Green Gate. Um, and sometimes visiting children - so sometimes women brought their children for the day. But yeah, I mean as far as as I can remember, it was a bit like kind of an adventure camp really. It was a bit like, I don't know - Woodcraft Folk, you know, that kind of thing. Normally they were involved in doing stuff like, you know building fires, or collected wood, or doing stuff, you know, sometimes there were organised things. I remember if there was a big demonstration, they'd quite often do something specifically for the children, which might be a trail or, you know, I think some of them were engaged in weaving something into the fence. So, from that point of

**view, yeah, I can't really say much about day to day, because I didn't live with them on a day to day basis.**

Um, these questions you've kind of already answered, so how would you say that being a committed activist and campaigner has affected your personal life? Do the two integrate?

**Yes. Fundamentally.**

Yeah!

**I think it's just part of who I am and what I do. There's always something, there's always something going on. And for a long time, it was a, it was at a level of, you know, going to demonstrations and, and singing in a political choir and that kind of thing. Since I've retired, I've had more time for getting out and doing stuff.**

And you talked very briefly about - not really conditions in camp, but also from photos that I've seen, I see a lot of wool, and a lot of damp wool.

**(Laughs).**

That was one of the main things I remember about looking at the photos, and how cold you must have been, and I wonder if you can talk about just the basic day to day survival of it, and kind of like, how did you shower - if you did shower, those sorts of thing?

**Oh! (Laughs). It was um, it was cold and often wet, and often muddy. Um, we - washing facilities were primitive on camp. If you went down into the village, you could use, er, you could use toilets and washrooms in places like restaurants and cafes and stuff. They weren't very keen, but some of them were more welcoming than others. After a bit the Quakers let us use their facilities in their meeting, um, their meeting rooms and so that was the best, best bet really. There were local people who would invite you to use their shower, use their bathrooms and stuff. So we tried to kind of take it in terms a bit. Not all go at once! (Laughs).**

But yeah, it was a, it was just yeah, I don't know - would I do it now? No, probably not. Probably not. You were living in the mud a lot of the time. So yeah, the the sleeping facilities, the sleeping facility that we had at Blue Gate, the bender, we had at Blue Gate, because it was a fence, with prongs on, you'd get a big sheet of plastic. Hook it over the prongs, stretch it down the fence along the ground, put some heavy things - bricks or shoes, or something at that end, and then drag it back over and hook it over the fence again. So you've got like a triangular envelope of polythene with no sides on, and that's, that's kind of what we slept in. And sometimes it would get quite crowded. You'd have a lot of women, and a lot of dogs and cats in there. Particularly if it was raining. And yeah, a lot of wet, wet clothes. Yeah, wet wool, wet jeans. Thing about jeans is when they get wet, they get wet from the bottom. And it just goes up and up and up and up, and your knickers are wet! And they take a long time to dry! Yeah. And we had the Quakers used to bring, and other, and other people not just - it wasn't just them. Other people used to bring Gore-tex sleeping bags and stuff, which were just fantastic. Because they were just everything proof - you could sleep outside in a Gore-tex sleeping bag, and be more comfortable, and drier and warmer than you would be in the bender. But of-course, they were the first things that the bailiffs went for. So we have we had to be really protective of them and, you know, try and get squirrelled away out of sight hiding in the woods or in the back of the van. Yeah, a lot of the time, I mean, it was really, it was quite boring some of the time, because a lot of the time you were just huddling around the fire. The fire was going all of the time. People would bring up carloads of wood. And sometimes it was, it had been painted, or I had creosote on it and stuff like that. So the fumes were just awful. When I, when I worked, and I used to go for the weekend, people at work used to laugh at me because I'd turn up on Monday morning, and my hair, and my clothes absolutely reeking of wood smoke and smudges around my face, and they'd go 'Hope you've brought a change of clothes, get in the shower! We'll see you in half an hour!' They were very, very tolerant actually, and I got arrested a lot of times, but I was never charged, never went to court. But I got arrested a lot and in the end I thought, I'm going to have to tell my work about this because sooner or later, um, I'm gonna be

held overnight, and I won't be able to get back in time. Whatever so, I've got the things you do, like your that the solicitors' number in your shoe and all that, all that business. So I told my work, and and they were, they were absolutely fine about it, and they were just 'Well if it happens, you need to let us know. And whatever time you're not here you'll have to take as leave.' Well okay, I said 'Will I be sacked?' They say 'It will depend on what the charge is, but probably not.' (Laughs).

Why were you arrested?

Oh, they just used to round us up. I mean, usually it would be things like obstruction or trespass. They did some, they didn't - they invented some new bylaws or something at one point, which meant that if you did certain things, you were now breaking the law, whereas last week, you weren't breaking the law. So they used to just, I think a lot of the time, it was just about getting us out of the way. So they would round up 20 or 30 women and they would cart us all in vans down to the nick and stick us in the cells, and then just leave us there for several hours. And then you know, they'd kind of come and, they'd say 'Right. We're not going to bother interviewing you. Go.' And that would be that you know, and so you'd have spent several hours there thinking okay, so normally what they would do if they were going to charge you, they would take you down there, they'd leave you to stew for a few hours, then they'd interview you, keep you overnight, and haul you up in front of the magistrates the next morning. But I think when it got to the point where they had so many of us, they just kind of gave up with it because it was clogging up the court system, eventually, it was just you know, every morning, they just had this parade of women, you know, they would fine you and then women would refuse to be bound over. So then they had to be sent to prison. And so you usually got 14 days or 28 days. Um so then they were clogging up the prison, and the, and the other women in prison were usually quite sympathetic of Greenham women. (Laughs). I think, I think it just became too, you know, too difficult to process. So they just used it as a way of clearing us out of the way while they did things. Particularly if we were lying in front of the gate and tying

ourselves to it, and chaining ourselves to, stuff like that - putting chains around the gate.

It also seems a way of - it's almost like gaslighting you as well. It's like taking you away, putting you somewhere, making you more anxious.

Yeah.

That 'You can go.' It's kind of like a psychological thing. It's like...

Yes. Yes. You don't know then when it's gonna happen. We got arrested, some of us are arrested on Salisbury Plain once. Four of us had gone, we went to do a recce, we were planning a walk from Avebury stone circle across Salisbury Plain to Stonehenge. And um, there was a woman, Canadian woman called Star Hawk, which, who was going to come and, and, and do some rituals with us along the way. So four of us went to just suss out the route and have a look at it, and we got, we got to Salisbury Plain, and the flags were up, which means that they're - you're not allowed to go there because they're doing an exercise. Anyway, we brought a picnic with us, so we decided we'd just go and have a picnic. So there we are having our picnic in the middle of Salisbury Plain, and all of a sudden over the hill comes this kind of armoured car and a bunch of squaddies in, in combat gear and, and camouflage with twigs in their hats and guns and stuff. And so we had a bit of an exchange about you know 'What are you doing here?' and we said 'We're just having a picnic,' and they went 'Oh, yeah, right. We know who you are. We know what you're doing here.' We said 'We're just having a picnic.' 'Well, then you can go.' So that was one of those, another one of those I'm not going! That was another one of those - 'Shall we go?' 'No, we're not going, we're just, no we're not doing anything, we're just sitting.' So they arrested us. And they put us in this, in this vehicle which had kind of blacked out windows, and they drove us around for ages and then they took us into this that it was like an underground base somewhere, and they were being really menacing and saying things like 'Nobody knows where you are. Nobody knows you're here. You don't know where you are, we can do what we like

down here. This isn't subject to normal police procedures, we're not the police, we're the military police.' So there's all this going on. And they separated three of us from another woman who'd been probably a bit more mouthy than we'd been, and they took her off somewhere. And they wanted to take our photographs and our fingerprints, and we were refusing and saying 'You have no right to do that. And you can't do that unless you've charged us, and what are you charging us with? We were just having a picnic.' And all that! And then they said, they left us there for an hour or so - somebody came back and they said. 'Right. We're gonna let you go.' And we said 'Well, what about our friend?' 'Oh, we haven't finished with yet.' 'Well, we're not going. We're not going until you produce her.' 'This is your chance, if you want to go you've got to go now.' 'No, we're not going until...' So that went on for about another hour. And then they produced her, and they stuck us all back in this vehicle and drove us around for ages and ages and ages. And you know, we were kind of a bit well, what are they going to do with us, when are they gonna let us out? And eventually they just opened the thing and said 'Right, get out. All of you. Get lost.' Shut the door, drove off. So we're standing there thinking well - we got out, and, and it was really strange. We worked out we were about 500 yards away from the pub, where we'd parked my car. So then of-course we were like completely paranoid about did they know this all along? Did they, did they see us? Did they track us from there? All the way down the road. Did they wait for us to kind of get settled, sit down, before they came for us? Was it just a coincidence?

Yeah, how strange.

But it was, it was really just that bizarre kind of thing about actually they're, right, nobody does know where we are. They knew where we'd gone. People knew where we'd go, but would they - we didn't know how far away we were from Salisbury Plain by this time, dragging us around, we could have been bloody miles away.

God, that is terrifying.

**Yeah, it was. It was. That was the, that was the only time I think, genuinely, I was scared. Because I thought I really don't know what's gonna happen now. Normally, there was a bit of a pattern to things that you could kind of go, no, they'll do this. And then they'll do this. And then they'll say that, and we'll say this. That time. I really wasn't sure.**

Were you ever scared at Greenham?

**No. No. I would say I was - there were times when I was um, a bit anxious about what was going to happen. No, I wouldn't say I was ever scared. No.**

Was it because you think, do you think it was because you're surrounded by people, and like you said it was that kind of predictability thing?

**Yeah.**

They'll do this, and then they'll do that?

**Yes, well it and because I mean, we know now we weren't actually that visible, but we felt quite visible. We felt like people would notice. Although some of the things, like there was this theory that they were using some kind of, some kind of weapon or device inside the base, like a some kind of sound thing that was causing women to have really severe headaches and blackouts and stuff like that. And um, we were convinced that this was something that they were doing, and that it was it was mobile - that they were moving it around the base, because different women at different bases were being affected at different times. And we were convinced it was some kind of noise, you know, ultrasound or something like that, that was um, having this effect on some, some people. We never, we never proved it. And people thought it was just barmy. You know, people just like 'You're really paranoid now.' But I'm still convinced there was something that they were doing, there was something they were using that was causing that effect, because it was just so noticeable.**

And was there a feeling of paranoia as well?

I think, I think there was er - I don't know if it was paranoia. There was a lot of wariness. There was a lot of wariness about new people who came out of the blue. So there was a wariness about me when I was working, and I was coming down at weekends, and people were like, 'Well, what's that all about?' You know 'Where you're going when you're not here? And what's that kind of work?' Um, because I was a social work, I was like, okay, that's a bit dodgy and dubious, and whatever. But yeah, I mean, it was it was fairly easy to kind of prove your credentials, really. There'd be other people who say 'Oh, no, we know her, she's been around for ages, she used to live here.' But yeah, I think because there were people who infiltrated, there was some anxiety and maybe some paranoia about people who just showed up. It was like, well, where have you come from and why are you here?

And why did you stop going? I can't remember if you talked about that.

I guess just because my life changed, and I got involved in other things, and it felt for me like, a bit like it was - I don't know, I'd just spent enough time there, I think. Spent enough time, I was tired, and it felt like nothing was changing. It was, yeah.

How did you feel when it finished?

Um. How did I feel about it? I don't know. A bit sad. I think by then, because by the time it finished completely, the missiles were gone. It was you know, it was all over. And it was hard to see, see it as a victory.

Okay.

Because I don't believe, I still don't believe that the missiles went because of the camp. So yeah, it just yeah, a bit sad. A bit like, well, in the end, they did go. Um. So they went before we did. So even though it was a long time after I'd been there, you know, I still considered myself a Greenham woman.

Yeah, of-course.

**Yeah, they went before we did, we outlasted them. But yeah, bit of a, yeah, bit of a questioning, I suppose. I'm guessing that the women who were still were still getting something from it. Were still feeling that it was worth being there. And it was a good way that they wanted to live.**

Yeah.

(Edit in recording).

What I really didn't understand when I was interviewing yesterday with the Women Against Pit Closures was that there is still such a huge animosity against the women who were involved in those protests. And for me, it's kind of like it was so long go, let it go. Not for the women who believed in it, but more for the people who opposed it - just it's, it's done, it doesn't exist anymore. Let it go. The world's moved on. Um. And just to accept that it is a huge part of British history, and a huge part of working class history, and women's history and LGBTQ history. Just, just let go of your animosity, it's done.

**Yeah! (Laughs).**

What can you achieve from this? And I think that is something that I'm struck by, as I've kind of been telling people about the project. And I think a lot of that is to do with the media, and how the media treated the women at Greenham, the misinformation that was out there, and how, you know, we all know, like the certain newspapers and certain media outlets are a wing of a party.

**Yeah. Yeah.**

And they're toeing the party line. And that is, in my view abhorrent, and it shouldn't, it should never be allowed in the free world. And I um, and, and that's why I also think maybe it hasn't been documented in an

objective way. Because it's a bit of a cliché that the first draft of history is the media, but it's kind of they are sources that historians use. And if the only sources that they've got are newspaper articles, which calls them kind of whatever, then that's going to be the history that is written down. Or, the first kind of history that is written down.

**I think we've, we've learned quite a lot in various protest movements about that from Greenham. Because, because the women's voices weren't there.**

Yeah.

**And their attempts to capture them since then - there have been, and there are things that capture them, but they're not easily findable.**

Yeah.

**So the same thing happened here with the trees, trees, movement, lots and lots of very negative publicity about the campaigners. Lots of stuff that was just downright lies, and has now been proved to be lies. And so it's all coming out now. But the campaigners had been really clear about documenting their, their side of the story, from the beginning, and making that very publicly available, and using mainstream media and social media, and keeping a record of things, and using filmmaking and stuff like that. So I think there's something about you know that if you're in that kind of protest movement, mainstream media is going to come after you. You know that they're going to be used very politically, just like the police, just like security, they're going to come to you. And they're going to tell what are very similar kinds of lies every time. And it's almost like you can predict the things they're going to say. So they're going to say that you're dangerous, they're going to say you're violent, they're going to say that you're using strategies that will um, put at risk members of the public or workers going about their business. They're going to say you're dirty. They're going to say that you're hippies, they're going to say that you're lazy, and that you don't have any jobs and you don't, you know, all of those things. They say them every single**

**time, they say them about frackers. They said we're about tree protectors, they say them about Occupy people. They say about...**

Student protestors.

**Student protestors, all of it. Every single time they're the same things that they said about the Greenham women. And you know, I don't know if they said the same things about the Aldermaston marches. I only went on one of them when I was young, but there was something there about people being cowards.**

Mmmm, mmm. And kind of, because I was kind of thinking after the interviews yesterday about the miners' strike, and how that has become part of a British history narrative in a post war context. And it just exists. It's not positive or negative. It just exists. That is what happened. Then this came after, and it's an event.

**Yeah.**

And I think that's the way it needs to be with a lot of other protest movements, or women's movements, especially - it happened. That was it. There's no opinion on it - in an objective historians way, move on. And with, with the protest movements around the miners' strike, and also Greenham, that's what I can't get over - that people still have an opinion on it. It's like well it's not an opinion. It's a fact. This is what happened. This is what came after it. And hopefully...

**Was that because it was women?**

I think so.

**There's a big, there was a big thing wasn't there about, about women abandoning their responsibilities, particularly abandoning their husbands and their children's to go and sit in the mud somewhere. I know that was a massive thing with Greenham. Always if they ever did a story about a woman, there was ever anything in the paper about a**

woman, they would always make a point of saying whether or not she had children and a husband, and where they, where they were, and they would always if they were interviewing - in the early days women would agree to be interviewed because they felt like it might be a way of getting their point across. And I think as time went on, we just learned that it wasn't worth doing because they would twist everything.

Yeah.

But yeah, quite often women would be interviewed, and they would always say 'You know, where is your husband? Where are your children? What does your husband think about this? How do you think your children are managing without their mother?' You know, there would always be lots and lots of that kind of stuff. And women did, you know, did feel a way about it? They did feel like, yeah, well, are they alright? And, is it okay for me to be here? And, you know, women who had their children with them, would ask themselves those questions. They would never ever admit that publicly, but they did ask themselves those questions.

And I think as well, people coming forward with their stories, maybe that hesitation is still there, because yeah, it is something which disrupts what is expected or traditional. And whenever those things happen, people, and people are met with those questions in a combative way, not in a kind of, I genuinely want to understand how you feel about this, um, there's going to be hesitancy, and people are going to withdraw into themselves and not talk about it. And also, the trauma must be a massive thing as well, like we - like you talked about with the bailiffs, there must have been - and the woman you mentioned with the leg, the broken leg, there must be hundreds of stories, thousands of stories of women who are traumatised by what happened. And to put their stories in the public domain is a huge responsibility, but it's like ethically, but also, like, we don't live in a world which, unfortunately, which doesn't treat trauma survivors or people suffering with trauma in a respectful way. And I think maybe that has something to do with the stories not being documented, or something as well. I also wonder if it's because

it's about nuclear weapons, which is still an ongoing thing, that there's a political edge to not talking about it in a positive way as well. Whereas mining, is done, it's over clean, cut dry. Well, not really.

**Well, no, not really! (Laughs).**

In a sense, the strike is over, if that makes sense, and it's done and it's a period of history that you can measure. And whereas nuclear is still happening, it's still an evolving thing that's happening. It's linked to climate change and things like that, that... Yes, yeah. Hopefully this will help.

**I hope so.**