

Sally Hay

So first of all, Sally, can I ask you how you actually became involved in the whole movement?

In, er, from about 1980, I was living in Pangbourne in Berkshire, having just finished university, and I was living with a partner and we became aware of things happening somewhere near Newbury, which was very far away. And on one particular Sunday, I recall my partner and I went down to Greenham common. And I don't remember the date, but there was an awful lot of people there. And it was before it became a women's camp. So it was men and women. And I remember we were at what became known as Main Gate at one point, and there was a sort of rush for the police were very violent in the way in which they pushed people back. And I was horrified. And we were both quite shocked by it. But my partner became - I felt, quite excited by the aggression. And so later that - we stayed on talking to people, and everybody was doing as people do following a large emotional event - going through their individual perspectives of what they saw, what they heard, and how dreadful it was. And I became aware there was a meeting going on at which women older than me, more vocal, and a great deal more competent than me were saying 'This is the problem of having men at the camp', and quietly thinking to myself, wow, that's a - that sounded, I know it sounds silly, but this chimed with what I was feeling about what I'd seen and heard - that it was the men. Both male police officers, but also the male protesters - it was men. Um, I thereafter started going to Greenham - I was working at the time and I wasn't a barrister then, I was working at Radio 210 doing voiceovers. And, and I started going down to Greenham on my own at weekends, and we subsequently moved to London. And when we got to London, I wasn't working because our little girl had just been born. So she was born in November 1984. So we've now had a fixed point date, actually. I had stopped working and it was - I went on and did other things and retrained after that, but there were a group of women in Alexandra Palace holding up placards, and having a peace camp on the slope as it went down by the grove. I don't

you know, Alexandra Palace, but it was by the grove in Alexandra Palace - there were a group of women, and so I went to see them. And I joined their little camp, and I can remember being - I became friends with those women, particularly Sue Roffie, as she became she was Sue Marshall then, she and her partner got married, and both change their name to Roffie which I thought was terribly impressive. It was neither of their surnames and so I was quite impressed by that. And Maggie Weatherby was also very influential and Pat Arrowsmith was a member of that group, and she was already someone whose literature I'd read. Because Pat was a journalist and an author, who wrote on - and had would be one of the original CND campaigners from an era when I would have been too young to have been engaged with it, I think it's reasonable to say. And Pat's a really, you know, impressive person and takes absolutely no nonsense. And so they had a Greenham women's support group, so I joined it. And it was marvellous, because these were intelligent, educated, feminist, sensible women. And that's, that and they, were all, and I didn't have a car or anything, or really hardly any money at that stage to be fair, but they organised car - various of them did work and did have jobs and cars. And, and we also organised coaches and things. And so I started getting to Greenham regularly with them, and became part of the weekend Greenham support network, and we went and took it in turns to do weekends, to allow the women who were there all the time, a little bit of respite, so that's really - sorry it's a really long answer!

No! Perfect (laughs), love it. Okay, so you were going to Greenham in this support group. What did you do there? What's the living conditions?

Well, the purposes of our visits were to take supplies, and we took - probably my own bodyweight in lentils, I should have thought! (Laughs). And warm, dry clothes and wellingtons, and things like that - tinned food, in-fact, that's what I remember taking - that seems very odd now, but I don't know why. But also, we did the night watch. Because if they were doing night watch 5 nights a week, to have 2 nights off, and actually get a night's sleep, or at least the opportunity of a night's sleep,

whether or not they actually got it or not was a different thing - was said to be of help. And so, we - I mean to do a night watch basically you sit around the fire and wait.

For what?

Well, for what? And actually waiting for something dreadful that might happen and you don't know what it is, is really quite mean, because something dreadful might happen, but what? And we had heard of dreadful things happening. Mostly what actually happened was groups of pissed up men in Ford, Vauxhall Vivas, or Ford Fiestas drove past, yelling 'Fucking lezzers' at us, and calling us dirty, which given that we're sitting in, you know, in mud, so well, you know, what would you do? What would you expect I should be wearing? Court shoes and 10 denier stockings? I mean don't be ridiculous. Sometimes they were evictions, but those tended to happen not actually at night but at dawn, so it was - they didn't happen in the dark, which I think would have been - I found evictions times of terrible confusion, because you never knew that it was about to happen until they were upon you. And then there was suddenly bailiffs, assisted by police officers - though the police officers didn't actually do anything. But the bailiffs just throwing stuff onto the back of flat pack - not flat pack lorries, what do I mean? Flatbed lorries, I mean don't I? Onto the back of flatbed lorries and just, you know, sometimes it was stuff that was really precious to women, or women had asked us to look after something in particular, and many women have built benders, you know - sort of...

Is that plastic over a...

Plastic over a branch, sort of makeshift tent, or bivouac if you will, and and obviously quite a lot of work had gone into the building of this said Bender, and you needed a piece of plastic anyway, you needed the tarpaulin anyway. And it - protecting that from a bailiff is actually impossible. Because if they'll have come there with this specific mission of clearing the area, they will kick it down, they will throw the plastic away, and then that's that really.

Were the bailiffs actually violent to you?

No.

No. It was totally about taking possessions?

I, I saw people - women experiencing violence.

Was that because they had themselves involved themselves initially?
Just got in the way?

I think possibly. I think possibly, I mean, there is a way of being confrontational that will not cause violence, and there is ways of being confrontational, which will get you pushed over. And I think that it's a matter of luck, which happens to be your style. I don't think it's a judgment call on this. You know, I worked as a barrister in a domestic violence for many years later, and then stopped many years ago. So and obviously at court there are scenes of violence with that, and I've been at court where there have been fights at court, and I think that there is something about some people that makes them more likely to get hurt than there is about other people. And I seem to be one of those who doesn't - who seems to, you know, the urge to punch me I'm sure is great in many people, but they don't actually get around to doing so.

Can I just ask you - you were saying you were sitting around the fire waiting for something to happen. That sounds very external. Were you waiting for anything from within?

From within myself?

No, sorry.

Oh, from them?

Yes.

Well, that, the night watch, yes. I may be wrong about this, but in my mind, there were occasions when we were just on night watch protecting the gates, and we were allocated different gates at different times, obviously, because different gates had different requirements. But there were other occasions when there were convoys coming out to go over Salisbury Plain, and practice Armageddon - practicing Armageddon, as if that was something that needed much practice. And then this would be something that was more specific, and we would usually sort of form a line across the front of Main Gate, often lighting candles in the path of where the big lorries with the weapons on them would come out.

Would you know they were coming, or was this a very quick operation?

I think people knew in advance, I think the women phoned, and more of us came down to London when we knew that they were planning an operation.

You would actually know that they were planning an operation?

Well, and they often did operations on a Friday night. Now, I'm not quite sure why a Friday night would have been - you'd have thought it'd be worse - the traffic would be worse, really. But, and there were midweek ones, which were more difficult for other women in the group to come to because of course they had got jobs to get to in the morning, and if you're coming down from London you're going to be driving around all over Salisbury Plain following convoys of great big weapons, you know, it's difficult get into the office in the morning. But no, we did follow them and block their way, and obstruct them, and just make bloody nuisance of ourselves.

So you actually went on and followed them on the journey, and actually tried to obstruct them even when they're out on that journey?

Yes.

And it wasn't just a question of blocking them as they came out?

Ultimately, you can't stop them coming out. They have, they, they you see the lights coming towards the gate from the inside. Because obviously the lorries have got lights on the front, and you will get across the relevant gate, and then they open the gate, and then they move you on, and then you gradually seep back. And this sort of standoff occurred, you know, for an hour or so, and ultimately they would win. They would get their lorry out, because they've got great big heavy lorries and a police force. And we've got a load of candles. And then, sometimes we would then quickly get into vehicles and follow them, and overtake them and stop in the road, and you know, and there was terrible - this is treason, treason pursuit! And, and this is, you know, obstructing Her Majesty's armaments. There were all sorts of spurious legal twattery talk, excuse me, talked about what was going on. And it was partly the absolute nonsense, the absolute legal nonsense that was being talked, that made me think this is ridiculous. And that's actually why I became a barrister, because this is ridiculous. The police and bailiffs talk nonsense in legalese. And how win the day, and I felt no no no.

So this initial vocabulary or way of speaking was actually coming from the police and the bailiffs?

Yes, yes, yes. And some of the some of the guards, the perimeter guards, and I remember one of the things that we used to do was go and talk to the perimeter guards, who were you know - guys, young guys, younger than my boys are now, so 18/19, you know, kids - and try, I suppose it sounds terribly patronising - try and explain our position to them. And they weren't uniformly hostile to our position. I mean they were relatively hostile to us cutting the fence with bolt cutters, I think it's reasonable to say, but they weren't uniformly hostile to our position. But they had been given a script of err, things, I think that they were supposed to say to us. And they'd also been told not to engage - not

unreasonably, I think if I was trying to command an army, I'd say 'Don't talk to the protesters, dear.'

So you're talking... and were they on the other side of the fence?

Yes, yes, they would be the other side of the fence.

Were they American?

Yes, they would be American. Yes. Yeah. They'd often come to the fence and you'd be there with your bolt cutters trying to cut the fence and they'd sort of go (adopts American accent) 'Oh geez man, please don't do that.' And we would say 'Well, we need to come in there, it's common land. And we think you've got something really big and dangerous in there, and we need to get it off the common land because it is dangerous.' And then they'd say 'Well, you know, you know I can bring the police - are going to come down and arrest you'. Women were very funny. There was a lot of humour. People would say, 'All right, but if you could just hold it tight, because it's easier to snip, and you know, generally take the piss. And I can't see a pair of wellingtons these days - even now after all these years - without wondering if they're wide enough to get my leg and the bolt cutters in them.

(Laughs). Wonderful, wonderful! You did mention earlier about gates and their different functions. I'm aware of the different colours - I don't know what the different colours means. But you mentioned the different functions that go with the colour.

No, no no - all the gates we were just blocking them.

Right.

But I tell you what was different - so the gates all have the same function - though they only took, they only actually took the convoys of weapons out through Red Gate - through Main Gate, but there was traffic in and out of - I suppose soldiers, and supplies, and vans and

probably things like food, because they can't have brought it all in from America. Although it was suggested that quite a lot of it was actually you know, freighted in - airfreighted in. What there was, what was different about the gates was different atmospheres among the women at different gates. Extraordinary, but there was a particular atmosphere that I never felt very comfortable at Yellow Gate. You know, and it may have been different personality types and all, because there were relatively few women who were continuously there - women who made their homes say at Green Gate. The few women that were there became their family, and families have different atmospheres, and ways of function don't they? And I suppose that's how it, I suppose that's what happened. But there were gates, which was like 'Oh, and they phoned us, and they want us to do Green Gate,' and you'd be like 'Uh, really? Okay.' But there were other gates that made you feel more - I felt more relaxed at. Also I think it's the proximity to the road, as well.

Because that's the A34 coming down?

Yeah. It is.

The main one?

The big main road, sitting around a campfire by a big main road is slightly more intimidating than sitting by a campfire by a road where there's not many cars going past, and the chances of somebody yelling abuse at you, or throwing a bucket of pig's blood at you or whatever is relatively minimised by the lack of traffic, and also you see the lights coming. So if you see lights coming, you can be on the sort of alert, have a look, you know assess the situation as whatever it is comes towards you. Maybe they're just going to go past anyway because they're just somebody going about whatever they're doing. Whereas on, when you're on the main road, every car is a continual source of fear. And that's slightly more tiring.

You said for instance, at the Yellow Gate you felt quite uncomfortable?

I feel awful now for the women from Yellow Gate.

Well I have heard this before.

Oh have you? (Laughs). Isn't that funny. (A dog barks, and Sally brings them to her). Well, yes, I did. I thought that, oh, isn't this dreadful. This is dreadful. Just let it be then - I will say it. There are certain women who I've experienced as being more judgmental. You know, I have had then a male partner. I do now, in-fact, have a male partner. I had obviously just had a baby, because I quite often went during the daytime with Emily. I never took my daughter to a night watch - I hadn't got the nerve for that. But it was a, it was a more hostile to women who were in relationships with men atmosphere, and there's also slight sort of like 'Well you're not really committed are you? You come down once a week in your red wellingtons and clutter the place up with your fucking lentil curry!' And I think I felt judged as not quite cool enough. But you know, you reach your own level of what you can and can't do, don't you? And I, you know, as the years have gone past and I've engaged in various other political err, activities, I, I know what I can and can't do and how far I will go. And I'm not going to throw stones at anybody whether they're policemen or soldiers, I, I couldn't throw a stone. You know, I just, and it's not a moral judgment on people who can actually, I just personally couldn't. And I am a bit wet, and I'm a bit middle class (laughs).

Which of the gates made you feel most comfortable?

I always liked Purple Gate. Just nice people, and it's in a nice sort of snug little spot. And we had some, we had some really good nights there. We had some really - nights where people sat around and told stories, and successfully chased off people who were breaking the benders. And you felt, and I felt I had contributed - I had done something - that it all worked, and that we were successfully doing something meaningful.

As a type of person at Purple Gate - were there particular characteristics?

They were very gentle, the women at Purple Gate, and I think they were mothers there. I think there are women there with their children, actually. And so the atmosphere was much more um, protective. You know, they were - and they lived there, it was their home. It was not a scene of political action, so much as a home - they had committed to living there. And that decision that some women had managed to make, which is incredibly courageous of them, and you just felt good, and I want to help you.

And they were happy... to bring supplies to help?

To bring supplies to help. And to stay awake all night, so they could get a night's sleep. I wish I could do the staying awake all night!

I think it's age!

I do remember at Purple Gate once, I was there with my friend Jill. And we were talking to one of the women there who was telling us very interesting stories about her, her travels in India - which at that stage sounded quite impossibly exotic to me, and now I travel quite a bit. But it was - like she'd actually been to Goa. I mean, for heaven's sakes, is there no end to the the exoticism of some people? And I was wearing a little leather ankle boots which had a rubber sole, and they melted and completely stuck to the log against which I was resting them because I was so absorbed, that I hadn't noticed my boots melting. I mean you can't walk on boots once they've got a log shaped burnt bit in the sole! And I spent the rest of the weekend, hobbling around like a maniac, completely unable to cope!

(Laughs). Wonderful.

So, she must've been a very good raconteur!

Just, so time spent, yeah, I think when you were talking to Rebecca and Kate, you mentioned the fact that you knitted...

Yes!

Around Alexandra Palace. Do tell me about that.

In Alexandra Palace, up by the station end of Alexandra Palace. There is, if you go up towards - in the direction of the playground, but not that far, a bunker. And it is apparently - it is one of those bunkers into which the government was going to put people in the event of a nuclear attack. So it was a nuclear defence bunker. And there was to be an American army manoeuvre that weekend, and I don't know how we found out, and it was called Operation Lionheart. Serious operation, and they were going to practice in this bunker. And it was to take place in particular week, so we went up the weekend before - the North London Greenham support group, and macraméd it shut! And then set up camp. And it was great, because we were ever so local - we all lived in Muswell Hill at the time. And we had proper tents and - we didn't have benders, we had tents because we're very Muswell Hill! And we stayed there all weekend waiting for them to arrive, and when they arrived, it was marvellous because we greeted them 'Surprise! We've knitted it shut.' And they honestly weren't quite ready for that, and they haven't arrived with a police presence, and of-course they can't do anything because they're American soldiers, so they can't actually do anything about British citizens. Actually, oddly under the US UK lines agreement actor 1967, which Harold Wilson signed, actually yes, they could, but luckily, they didn't know that - because they aren't lawyers. They're American grunts, basically. So they asked us, (adopts American accent) 'Ma'am', to to go away, and to take the knitting, and the fretwork and all - and we said 'No, no, we're fine. Thank you. We'll stay.' Anyway, eventually, it was worked out, and they got some equipment and they removed the knitting. And they went in there where upon we knitted it shut again. I mean obviously they can get out, because it is after all, only yarn. But it was very jolly, and it made the local press, and it rather made the point that there is a nuclear bunker under under Ally Pally. It

was always said that there was one under the TUC centre in Crouch End as-well. I'm not sure whether that's true or not. I don't know. Do you know?

I don't, but I am aware of the rumour. What size is the...

Oh it's not very big. Smaller than this kitchen, I would say.

No! (Laughs).

Bigger - apparently it's bigger underneath, it sort of opens out, but the entrance is the smallest bit - presumably the bunker would be larger underneath. I mean...

It depends how many people they're trying to secrete down.

And what - they must have electricity and water and...

Supplies.

...communications and supplies. I mean there must be quite a lot down there to even consider putting people down a hole the size of this kitchen. I don't know. Obviously they didn't invite us in - which was rude!

(Laughs). Ah, lovely! Yes. Sort of from the early '80s you were aware of the camp, and you joined them. Um, how long did you maintain a contact with Greenham common, physically - visiting it?

Probably til, probably until about '87 or '88, I think. And then there was obviously the weapons have gone, which minimised - but my family lived in Cirencester, in-fact - down the M4. And I used to come off the motorway when I was driving back from seeing my mother or whatever, and just drive around the common - just to see if there was still, and there were people at Green Gate for a very long time afterwards. But the other gates not so, but there were often just bits of wool, posters,

photographs, you know, on - on the gate - on the fences for many years afterwards. So, then I started, in fact, at, err, I did a conversion degree and converted my philosophy degree into a law degree. And then did the bar straight afterwards in one of these fast stream things which involves, you know, doing 12 months at university for a year rather than the 6 months with my..... And so I was, I left my partner at the time, so I was working...

So we're around about sort of '88/'87?

Yeah, '87/'88 I - Emily, and I left my partner and I started bar school. And I became very focused on that, actually, at that time, and sort of, I think drifted away into other things for a bit.

Can I just take you back with your interest in law. Did you - were you present at any of the court hearings?

No, but I heard about many of them. And I was surprised at the extent - this is dreadful, but I really am a good middle class girl. I was brought up by two doctors in the Midlands, you know, I went to a grammar school, you know, honestly, I am not an 'out there terrorist'. And so I was really surprised to find that the police lied about people. I mean, honestly, it was a surprise. Now, obviously, after 30 years, a lawyer - it's absolutely par for the course, isn't it? And I realised that it happens all the time, and that people don't have the same issues about...

Is it lying, or is it different reporting of the same event?

Normally I think it's different reporting of the same events. I'm a great believer in, and all my clients at some point or other hear me saying 'It's much more likely it was a cock-up than a conspiracy, and most things are a cock-up, not a conspiracy.' But, there are out and out 'She swung a punch at me', that, you know, I knew had not happened. I was there, I saw it. She did not. I never saw a woman kick, punch or spit. And you know, the police statements said that women did that, and they didn't. They just didn't. I saw women swearing. I saw women um, blocking -

you know, obstructing - if you want to charge people for obstruction, probably, yeah - okay. There was a lot of obstruction going on. But I did not see women exacting violence on police officers, and I know that the statements that the police made in Newbury magistrates courts frequently said that they did.

And it was the actual statements - verbal statements. It wasn't sort of a little bit like Hillsborough, where they've literally gone back and doctored?

No, these, these were - they take taking people into custody overnight and producing them before the first bench available the next morning. So no, this didn't have the time for the sort of Hillsborough shenanigans, and it didn't have the time. You know, when I first started doing criminal law, police officers would say 'And we went back to the station and made up our notebooks'. And you always wanted to say 'Yeah, probably in your case literally, mate.' Um, but these were not that sort of statements. This was - like a drunk is arrested, and produced in the first available court in the morning, and the officer reads out from his notebook in court. So this is what they wrote at the time, and they were writing that 'I saw the lady I now recognise to be Miss Anne R Key throwing a punch at officer So and So.' And no, she didn't. And I think that.. (dog barks and Sally sorts it out!). I think that I was shocked by. And that was one of the things that I thought no, no, no, we need, we need our own lawyers.

And this is what's changed your whole journey?

Yeah, yeah, we need our own lawyers. I mean, and I maintain that we still do in relation to women who have been victims of domestic - or people who have been victims of domestic violence. It's not just women, but you know, the victims of domestic violence, the - need their lawyers. The homeless, the refugees - they need their own lawyers. They need people with an understanding of their situation who are coming from a position, which is not judge them before it starts.

Did the women have a representation - any legal representation - when they went into the courts?

Sometimes. Yes, there were - there were - the chambers that I subsequently joined, and in-fact became head of, um - we always did free representation, for Greenham women. We also always did free representation for the South African embassy, actually - protestors, not the embassy itself obviously - the protesters, and various other. And I know Hodge, Jones and Allen always did free representation. So there were, you know, the human rights, left wing, the radical lawyers there already. People like Jane Hoyle and Robert Layton, were out there doing it, and did come down and represent the Greenham women at court.

And were they men and women representing?

Yes. In those days it was predominantly men. Yeah. I mean, even when I started I was called to bar in 1989. And even when I started (laughs), it was so long ago!

No, no! I'm thinking of what you went through.

Because I had my daughter, and no visible means of financial support, I had to do it very quickly because I didn't have the money to do it at a leisurely pace. So I was called in July 1989, and even then, I think women were less than 20% of barristers at that time, and now we're more than 50% - although not of the judiciary. (Laughs). There is still a glass ceiling there.

Interesting. Um...

Funny enough, I talking to, this is a complete side issue, I was talking to someone or other - the kids actually over Christmas, and we were talking about clothes, because Emily and I went to the - I brought my daughter along to the party that they had for this - before Christmas, and it said 'Dress code: well wear whatever you like, we're totally sick of

women being told what they should wear', which we both rather enjoyed. And my husband Martin said 'I remember the day you came home and said they've said we can wear trousers to court.' And I do - I remember being in the robing room somewhere, and some woman came in and said 'The Lord Chancellor's just said women can wear trousers into court.' And we would literally 'No! (Sounds shocked). No!' I wouldn't dare - obviously by the end of my career, I wore trousers to court everyday. But it was very recently in my life, but it's all a long, long time ago.

One thing I wanted to ask, before we move on to your career and sort of life changing events - you were with the North London Greenham support groups, there were other support groups around - did they work together, or was there any animosity? Or support? Cooperation?

I can't remember there being any animosity, I think that um...

You didn't feel others were stronger than you?

They probably were, but I didn't know about it, but there wasn't much liaison, but then again, collectively there weren't many telephones (noise of builders) and yes, good idea, just shut that door that we weren't hear the builders. Certainly weren't mobile phones then, were there? I don't remember when they started, but there weren't then.

Bricks at the beginning of the '90s, I think.

Yeah, maybe that's right. Yeah, maybe - but I didn't even have a phone in the flat then, I didn't have a landline at home until after I qualified - terribly proud! So, communication was by letters, which did it - now if you asked people, the age now that we were then, to organise a million women to go, 100,000 women to go and hold hands round a facility in Newbury, but (adopts strict voice) you may only use paper and pen. They'd be like, 'No, that is literally impossible!' But it wasn't - it was done by letter. And I know that Sue Roffie had all the letters. I don't know if she still does, because she's such a - she, you know, coordinated

the...and there was a certain amount - sometimes people referred to suspicion that the home office were listening in to phone calls. Which I mean, I have no evidence either way, just seems so unlikely. But I don't know. Because there was a lot more - we were a lot nearer the Reds under the Beds scares, weren't we? We were a lot nearer the Cold War and people killing each other with poisoned umbrellas in Berkeley Square or whatever it was. And I just read a book actually about the female spies in the 1960s. But we did carry on spying quite intensively for quite a long time. I knew Stella Rimmington and she knows, obviously, a great deal about it. And I think it was - because she was also a trustee of Refuge, which is a charity with which I later became involved. And, but there was quite of spying went on - whether it was actually spying on Greenham women or not, I wouldn't know. I suppose it'll come out under the 30 years rule.

What did you do, or how did you raise funds as a group?

Selling cakes and baking cake. Other people knitted things - I unfortunately had no capacity for that sort of carry on. And we had jumble sales, which is sort of pre eBay wasn't it! (Laughs).

So it was on a very domestic...

A very domestic level, and there wasn't, you know, we had a stall usually either in Muswell Hill High Street or Crouch End High Street on a Saturday morning, and had buckets so people could, you know, contribute. But that was about it.

Interesting. During the period that you were - I assume you were you were working while you were going backwards and forwards to Greenham common?

Yes.

Yes. How did you support yourself? You had a job, then you were studying?

Yeah.

You were a single mum?

Yeah.

How did you support yourself?

Well funny enough I did market research interviewing in an evening. Which was door to door, because they weren't telephone interviewing then, well then I didn't have a phone, so that would have been a total wash out. I just did little jobs.

What was the effect of all your activity on your relationship, both with your family and your friends?

My sister, is - she and I - people always say 'You're so different. How did that happen?' She is a committee member of the golf club in the Cotswolds. And, you know, she's a nice, she's a decent human being, but she has always voted Tory.

Is she older or younger?

She's two years older than me. She's always voted Conservative. She won the Posture Prize at school. I was never going to win the Posture Prize at school! And she was made a prefect - clearly I was never going to be made a prefect if anything! I think I was once milk bodger, but that was about it. Do you remember those little....that was about it. And my sister is very, um she sort of dressed like - at that time when I was at Greenham, she dressed like Princess Diana, and drove a VW Golf. But, and everybody disapproved of me somewhat. Well, actually time limited, I've been 60 years of virtually constant familial disapproval has been my lot. I am a complete washout in my family. My family would not send me out to buy stamps. But she came and visited me at Greenham once, and it's one of those bright stars of - so her contempt for me is not complete, that stands out, that she, I remember her, and

she was virtually in a twin set and pearls, picking across the mud at Greenham. And I don't really remember - I remember being very confused as to whether I was pleased to see her, or embarrassed by her. Or ashamed of how absolutely filthy, you know, suddenly caught sight of myself in her eyes and realised that, you know, I was a matted mess! (Laughs). As so often appears to be the case. So, in terms of my family, my mother would have been very shocked by my father's death, which happened when he was 52. So looking back, that was very.

And what age were you at that stage?

I was 21 when dad died.

Right. So this is actually at the same time as Greenham is going on?

Yeah. And so my mother was neither in a position to approve or could - nor condemn, she was totally wrapped up in her justifiable grief, really. So what mum thought about it, I don't know. I know that, I know that a couple of my aunts were terribly amused by the whole thing and used to send me, you know, specially warm jumpers for (adopts posh voice) Greenham common, my dear! Sent down from Edinburgh where they do the warm jumpers on a rather large scale, which was great. Because, you know, that sort of acknowledgment rather than support is, is, is always lovely, isn't it? In relation to Steve who is Emily's father, um, Steve nominally completely supported it, but I know that he was knocked that I was - that men had been excluded from the Greenham thing. And that I was doing something independently of him, because he was a politico - still is, in-fact, a real, you know, out there politico was going down to Wapping and having fights at Wapping. And I remember one particular occasion when we were having a meeting round at Sue Roffie's, which was about a mile or two's walk from where we lived, and I had left him with Emily - who was a breastfed baby, but I had left - do you remember, I don't know if they still do it - the expressing milk - laugh! It's awful! And dreadful, but I had left two bottles of expressed milk and a bottle of sterilised water, in-case of her waking up, and I was only out for about 2 hours anyway. But I remember him walking around

to Sue Roffie's, with Emily wrapped in a vast quantity of woollen fabric, and thundering, thunderously hammering on the door and saying 'You have abandoned your baby.' Yes, and I said 'Well didn't you give her the bottle?' And I remember him saying, and she would have been like 6 months old - 'She glared at me, and tried to punch me', oh for fuck's sake, she's a baby! And he was terribly supportive notionally. But as with, in-fact, my flipping studies at the bar which involve done dining in all, you have to go and eat dinner - for god's sake, 24 times and he would always say he would babysit and it knocks me when men call being at home alone with their babies 'babysitting' because it's ridiculous and, and he would babysit and then would fail to turn up. Would fail to turn up home from work, and let me down, so I was constantly having to cancel dining arrangements. And I was constantly having to cancel grading meetings, because in-fact he would subvert it. And in-fact, I think the reality is that it wasn't the only fact, by no means, but it was one of the factors of me becoming less of a nice girl, becoming more an independent woman, and someone with my own views, and someone who would do things independently of him. And ultimately, that didn't work.

At what time did you actually split?

I would have left him in 1988.

Right so before you'd actually got to the bar?

Yeah. Yes I was a student.

I wanted to ask you which individuals and events were of particular influence or particular significance to you in your - why you changed direction?

There were a few individuals whose influence - people who I saw as being able to put a political or moral thought into action. Who I therefore admired I admired Pat Arrowsmith enormously. Although she is socially quite difficult. People find her difficult to get on with. And I

remember my mother saying 'Oh Pat Arrowsmith. They left the country in '56 in the Cuban Missile Crisis, she and somebody else had left the country and they were - you know, so that's how much committed they are to...'

How did she know that?

I have no idea! I cannot imagine how my mother knew that. But she had some particular objection to Pat. Very strange, but I remember hearing actually, oh, what's his name? It's just gone. I can picture his face. Head of CND at the time, man, Christian, and anyway - I was later stranded on a train with him many years later, in a snowstorm, funnily enough. And he was awfully good. And they said they were going to throw us all off the train, although the train was clearly going to head in the direction we needed to be going. Um - Bruce - Bruce, his first name's Bruce...it'll come back. And I said 'Well, in that case, I'm just going to stand here in the doorway.' And he laughed, and I said 'I know who you are. You're as capable of direct action as I am.' And he said, 'You're absolutely right. I'll get the next door along!' And the two of us stood there and held the doors open until they let us back on the train. But, it was Pat Arrowsmith, but it was also not the sort of superstars as Pat really was of the movement, because Pat had given her whole life over to CND. It was people like Maggie, and Sue Roffie, who were working - both of them as social workers at the time, which always seemed to me a terribly admirable way to comport yourself, and had children, and had partners, but who were absolutely on point on taking direct action. And I do remember in the early days when the miners' strike started, we were talking about the miners' strike and I was saying 'This is so dreadful because they've been very violent towards the police.'

Are you talking about the one at the end of the '80s?

Yes, yeah. And Sue Roffie was saying 'No. It's the police who are being violent towards the miners.' And opening up a whole new, a whole - because I would be reading The Guardian at this time on a daily basis.

And The Guardian was pretty anti-miners, actually - in the early stages, and opening up a whole new line of periodicals and literature for me to read. And so by the time Orgreave happened, realising that what was going on was not as it was portrayed in the mainstream -or press as it then, media as it would now be, and I didn't have a telly so it wouldn't have been the media particularly, it would have been the radio and The Guardian. And I think it was opening up a wider political stance to me, so that when I um, qualified and was looking for where I should apply for a tenancy, it had by then become obvious that I needed to apply to human rights sets, left wing sets, and I did. And I saw another friend who was also at Greenham - Sally Bradley, the other day - Christmas Day, actually, bumped into her on the heath. And Sally had been going out with a bloke called Andrew Gunbartizunoto (spelled phonetically), who was a member of Ten Kings Bench Walk, which was the chambers to which I applied. And I had a terrible interview there, because they were talking about - I have enormous boobs and good legs. And I also had a small child at the time, and this was the entire focus of the interview. And I came out absolutely shattered. And I told Sally about this. And she'd gone and screamed abuse at Andrew that night, and said, you know, 'Left wing, human rights set - and this is how a single mother is treated?' Because it's not bloody easy getting through the bar finals in 24 months. Um, you know, someone who's worked - for god's sake! And their head of chambers phoned me in my flat and said 'We've reported ourselves to bar council, because we've had a meeting and realised that we've behaved in a way in what is now called a sexist way towards you, and this is what's called discriminatory. And we are very sorry about it. So we have reported ourselves to the bar council.' And I said 'I'm perfectly well aware of what discrimination means. And, frankly, everybody else got 20 minutes on the law. And I got 19 minutes on the size of my tits. I want 20 minutes on the law.' And he said 'Tell me about the sexual discrimination legislation that's current at the moment.' And so I did, because I'd had a glass of wine and I was very cross, and we got to the end of it, and I said 'So am I going to get my interview and my 20 minutes on the law? And he said 'You've got the tenancy'. And that was actually the start of my career.

What a wonderful story.

Yes. And so whenever I see Sally on the heath, it's always, you know, but she was at Greenham too.

Over the past 25 years, what do you feel have been the main societal changes for women?

I think there is still discrimination. Obviously there is - there are not women at the top of any of the professions, or industry or commerce, I suppose. However, I am impressed by the extent to which young men these days seem to acknowledge young women as equals in a way that I don't think that we were acknowledged as equals. My sons - I see them behaving in non discriminatory ways. Um, and they do challenge every time, you know, they are - they open the discussion every time. Now, you may say 'Well, your sons would, because they'd be terrified not to.'

Sorry, can I just go back - what do you mean by open the conversation?

If they hear someone being treated in, in a bad way, they will challenge it. And I don't think we did. Fred and I - my eldest son and I, who is 23 now, walked into Waitrose - I'm sorry, I really am dreadful! Just before Christmas, and a bloke said, who was selling The Big Issue, 'Happy Noel, Happy Noel, Happy Noel', and a woman walking past him rather faster than us said to him 'You don't even know what Noel means, and you certainly couldn't spell it.'

(Gasps).

And I sort of, you know, bristled a bit and Fred suddenly hurried - faster, faster than I walk, and trotted in front of her and said 'Excuse me. I wondered why you chose to make an unkind remark for somebody who's clearly got learning difficulties? Were you commenting on the fact that he's clearly Muslim, from Muslim background as well? Or did that just come out of your..? Does it matter why he can't smell Noel? I

just thought it was rude, and you might like to get back and apologise to him?’ And I thought, my work here is done. But in terms of women, I, it was interesting, wasn't it? I don't if you had - I had the 10 O'Clock News on last night to see what's going on about Brexit, of-course, and then all the correspondents are female. You know, it was a woman news anchor, Laura Kunnsberg seems to be the world's biggest expert on Brexit that's - I mean admittedly let John Pienaar in for a bit, but there were other - and the women that were commenting on things like finance, and I noticed it just last night, and thinking that wasn't the case - newsreaders were a man called so and so. Having said which, there is everyday sexism out there. It is happening all the time. But the fact is that the young women are picking it up more and noticing it more, and challenging it more. And so I think there is an improvement, but there is work yet to be done.

How pivotal do you think Greenham common itself was in the way in which you conducted yourself - the movement?

For me personally, I think it was absolutely pivotal. I think it gave me a confidence and a focus which I probably wouldn't have had otherwise. Societally I don't know. I know now that some of my son's friends don't know what Greenham common was. And they're studying history - it's like Jesus! I remember when I started dating my current husband, I've only had the two so it's alright! But he is from a very, very, very different background to me. He's North London Jewish, much more monied than I was ever from, and all his mates were in business rather than in the law or social work, which all my mates were, and would talk about the girls in the office, and because I'd been at Greenham I would always say ‘You employ children? I am surprised.’ And it became clear ‘Oh god, you're one of those ‘wimen’ - with an ‘i’. That actually language is absolutely crucial. We will change - we can only change the world really effectively by changing language, and by challenging language which is of itself discriminatory. And so every time I pick it up, every time I challenged it, and I remember Martin's uncles, my husband's Iranian. And so these Iranian gentlemen came over when our sons were born, and they heard that I worked outside the house, ‘But why? Martin, can't you support

your wife? This is terrible.' It's like 'No no, I choose to work. And any way I have a daughter whom I support.' 'What she doesn't have a father that supports her?' 'No, I support her.' 'So what do you do?' 'Well, I'm a barrister, actually.' (Gasps). 'And how much they pay you for this?' I remember saying 'Well my current charge out rate is £500 an hour, what about yours?' And there was just this horror. But Greenham gave me the confidence to think I can do it, and to challenge it, and to say - and challenge police officers in the street. You don't see sexism on the street, but you do see racism on the street. You do see, you know, I saw somebody, some guy outside the refugee centre actually, being asked to turn out his bag on the street. Nothing - he had done nothing except for being a black bloke in a posh area. You know, I think Greenham gave me the confidence, and I think women, whether women would have gained that, more generally in the time span or whether it made, Greenham actually made a difference or not, I don't think it's possible to say - how would one know? Because you're never going to conduct a sort of blind testing on that, are you? Um, I think - I still, some of Martin's old mates still tease me and say 'Oh well, Greenham. Didn't make the slightest bit of difference, did it? They were going to remove the weapons when they did anyway. So all that sitting around in mud was utterly futile.' That may or may not be right. Again, I just don't know. But I think that it was really important that there were the group of Welsh women who said 'No.' And the rest of us said 'What she said - I'm with her.' I was really actually very pleased, Emily sent me some ridiculous pictures of her children, at the - one of the Brexit marches, the other day. And she's got a little boy and a little girl. And they were each holding a placard with an arrow on it and Alfie's said 'Not in her name', and Ella's said 'Not in his name'. And they were walking along at this march holding their placards, and there was a nice equality and justice about that. But there was also the sense that ordinary people can get out there on the street, and I taught my daughter that if she thinks it's wrong, she gets out there with her children on the street and says so, and that's (Sally becomes emotional), I'm proud of that. She knocked her teeth out of the back of the sofa when she was about 4. And when I took her to Eastman Dental Hospital, holding them in like this, is as went, hoping fallaciously, in-fact, that you can make them

reset. You can't - if you knock your front teeth out, that's it. But luckily they were baby teeth, so what the heck. But and we got there and they said 'What were you doing, dear?' And she said 'Oh, I was climbing over the fence breaking into Greenham common.'

(Laughs).

I said 'She wasn't, she was climbing over the back of the sofa, actually!' But that was, you know, when she was 4, which would have been in 1988, that was what she was doing - she was climbing over the fence.

That's lovely actually, because it takes me onto my last question, which is what's been the legacy for your daughter, your sons as well, as a result of Greenham common?

I think - I know (dog barks and gets reprimanded!) - I know that I mean for Emily it's, Emily is aware that she was there. And she was very touched to come and - I saw Sheila Noiling at that event just before Christmas, and Sheila gave Emily a Greenham women are everywhere badge. And Emily was terribly pleased with this, because, you know, she's, it's been part of her life, ever since she can remember, of-course. She's 34 now, she's got 3 children, and she wears it on her jacket - and I wear mine on my jacket at the moment. For her, it's always been important, it's something she's always been aware of. The boys didn't become aware of it because obviously they - they're younger, they're 21 and 23, as I say, so they - it wasn't part of their daily lives. But Fred brought his girlfriend home just before - for my 60th birthday in November, in-fact, the first time I met her. And she's the Green Party candidate in Bristol so I mean you know, very serious young woman, very nice, actually - what a relief!

(Laughs). Result!

Result! She constitutes a result! And um, Fred started introducing me to her, and said 'And actually mum was at Greenham common,' and I thought it's interesting, Fred, that you should choose that as one of the

things to say about me. And so I think it does make a difference to them. I mean, I am now - I think they think I'm scary. I think I am now scary. I don't think I was scary when I went to Greenham, I think I was scared. And I don't think I'm particularly scary. They should meet Pat Arrowsmith if they want to meet scary! And others are a lot more frightening than me, but equally, they know that they cannot get away with a casual sexist, racist remark. And they know that the thing that they could most say to horrify me, when they actually were trying to say things to horrify me the other day was like 'I joined the army'. You know, they know that that would really horrify me.

Yeah. Something just came up then. What - you were protesting about nuclear armaments at that point. What are your feelings about nuclear arms now? Does it change?

No, exactly the same. I was thinking about this actually, when I was thinking about you coming. I was thinking about this and thinking it remains an abomination. Obviously, I think that because (dog gets told off) the Cuban Missile Crisis was a lot closer to - chronologically, and we've now had peace for - we haven't had peace - definitely haven't globally had peace, but the threat since the Berlin Wall came down, you don't hear about it. I think that people lived with the daily sense that it was possible that there'd be a nuclear strike in the '70s and '80s. And I don't think that people do live with that. Now, I might be wrong. There may be people who still do fear that on a regular basis, but I imagine in smaller numbers, and certainly I don't anymore - I think that, but do you remember 'Protect and Survive', the government was still issuing literature suggesting you sat under the kitchen table in the event of a nuclear attack, because that would be bound to work!

I was just going to say I remember having a roll of tarred brown paper in our cellar ready to cut! (Laughs).

And you know, with the best will in the world, that was never going to work! (Dog barks, and gets apologised for!). And so, I don't think - that I'm sure if you live in Korea, you probably do think about it. Um, but in

the UK I don't think one does as much - though I wouldn't put anything past Donald Trump. Who may or may not be a Russian spy. (Laughs).

Can I just ask you one final question, actually? Do you regard yourself as a feminist?

Yes.

You do?

Absolutely.

Yeah. And what is your definition of a feminist?

Well, I think Caitlin Moran put it best in her 'How to be a Woman' book, which is 'If you if you look in your pants, and you notice that there isn't a penis there, and you don't think that undermines your capacity in any way, then you're a feminist.'

(Laughs).

I was talking to, and this is name dropping, I was talking to Lynne Featherstone, Baroness Featherstone, the other day, just because she's just had the same illness as I had a few years ago, and we were comparing notes on what one does about that. And I was saying you know, I don't always want to be confronting, but I find myself constantly confronting. I tried to buy a replacement vacuum cleaner the other day. And they said Miss or Mrs when I placed the order. It was like really? Really? I said - 'What do you say? How do you deal with that?' She said 'Oh, I tell them to fuck off. It's none of your business.' I thought yes, well hat would do it, really, that would do it. But that's about right, isn't it? It's - why? Why?! In this day and age, does anyone still ask that question? Okay, if it's on a form in front of someone who's working in a shop, then they're going to ask the question because it's on the form in front of them. But somebody designs that form, and that somebody must have had an education - who are they? If I book a flight online,

British Airways still ask - British Airways still ask! What?! How did the last - my mother qualified as a GP in, I think 1948, and there weren't that many women doctors in 1948. And she does exasperate me, because she says 'Well, of course, there was no discrimination in my day.' Really? No discrimination at all? 'Well, no. But I mean, you knew that some of them were a bit touchy. And you know, you had to sort of not go alone in a room with Dr so and so'. No no no, Mum! Fearing imminent sexual harassment from your superiors at work, is, is not a lack of discrimination. 'Oh, yes, but we just patted him away and said, on your way, Neville!' It exasperates me that some women continue to deny there's a problem, when there's manifestly still a problem.

Sally, that's been absolutely fascinating. I'm going to stop there.

I'm sorry, I could talk for England.

(Laughs). You can if you want!

No it's stopped.

It's still running. Is there anything else you would like to say about Greenham that I've scooted, or that you feel you haven't had the opportunity to talk about?

No, I feel that I paid a very, very minor role, and there were women that gave up so much, and behaved so well. And I'd like (dog gets told off) and I, I do hope that were a single, similar issue, a similar single issue to come up again, we can rely on the next generation of young women to get out there and do it.

Do you think we can?

Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. And it was Monsignor Bruce Kent.

Thank you.

Head of CND.

(Laughs). Thank you.