

Dawn Stewart

I'd like to ask you first of all, if I may, how did you become part of Greenham?

Right. I wasn't part of Greenham in the early years. Basically, I worked, I was an area manager working in London for Oxfam. Was very much aware of Greenham. But because of the political situation at the time, we were not, as erm management staff, really permitted to get too heavily involved with political acts with, you know, you know, yourself as a charity, you're not allowed to I couldn't - I mean, I had belonged to CND years previously, and things like that. You have to drop all those affiliations, be- especially with Margaret Thatcher, because it was just not a good, a good thing at all and not basically allowed, erm as as a charity. So I didn't get involved in the early days, but I actually subsequently left. I had lots of friends that had been so I was very much aware and supportive. I then actually left Oxfam during that period. And when I did, I was - left to go travelling. And I was, had rented a little place in Devon. So I thought, oh, great so going backwards and forwards between London and, and Devon, I can actually get to Greenham so I did. So every time you know, I was doing the journeys back and forwards, I would start with my old camper van - I had a Volkswagen camper van at the time. So I used to park up and stay a few days. And the thing was, at the end, there really was only Yellow Gate that were there on a permanent basis. The other gates would come and come and go for the odd weekends and things like that. But they, they - Yellow Gate was the only permanent group of women that were left there and quite low on numbers at some points. One of the women that had been there nine years, which is, I just found incredible. I learned so much from them. She only ever took a couple of weeks out over Christmas and New Year every year to go and see her family which I just - other than the odd stint in prison (Laughs). But either refusing or couldn't pay fines and things like that. So there was only a small bunch of women. So it was it was good in a way because around the fire, you got quite a lot of conversation. And I got a lot more information about what had gone on rather than just what was happening then. They were still trying to get into the base and cause some havoc every now and again. But it was low key, it was about we're still here, we haven't gone and they and they were determined to let the camp - the base know that they were still there, even though there was only a few of them really compared ... So it was a very low key event in that sense. But just they needed more numbers, really. But of course the big the main era of Greenham had really sort of died right down really and there wasn't a lot of publicity anymore. But there was just these hardline group of women who were just determined to stay there. And some women like me would would visit stay a few days and then move on and then come back or turn up at the weekend. So yeah, that basically - it was very quiet, very sort of low key compared to the heydays of Greenham shall we say...

So what year would it be then when you first arrived in your - was your van called Doris or something? Oh Gladys!

Gladys. What it is, if you refer back to the photographs, right, the van that they had with all the writing and stuff on the side, that van was called Gladys. And one day I turned up with a load of - you know, I just used to turn up with some food and a few beers for the girls and things. And we turned, I turned up there, they were in a real pickle because Gladys had died on them yet again. It was a very old vehicle as you can see from the photograph. And they didn't know what to do because the garage, the guys, the garage and the local, the chaps there had been great in trying to keep it going for them for years. They were given it in the first place. But to try to keep it legal, so cos it still had to be taxed and insured because although it was on common - every time the bailiffs turned up, you had to put everything in it and drive it off the land, otherwise they would confiscate. So it was imperative that they had a vehicle that could do this. Anyway, it died and the garage had said 'Look it's had it. We can't keep, we can't repair it anymore. It's just ridiculously expensive now to try to do it and blah, blah.' And they were really in a pickle because no money, what you do? So I went, took myself off with one of the others into Newbury to see if we can... and we went to the garage, and we had, I had a word with the guys, we had a word with the guys there. And they, I said, 'Have you got any vehicle that's cheap and cheerful, that we can, you know, that is legal?' And all they had was a car. They said, 'No commercial vehicles, but we have got a car.' And I said, that's no good, because they need somewhere to store food and their belongings really, basically. And so, the only other thing we can do is, is maybe hitch a little caravan to it, which I thought might be a good idea as well, because they're living in tents or whatever. You know, so if it was a really horrible - you could just about cram a number of women, at least, into this little, a little caravan, which will also store the stuff. And then I thought well that the other added benefit of that is you could have, if they had a gas cylinder, they could perhaps have a little bit of, you know, boil a kettle in there rather than the fire because it's pouring rain, they've had it. So that's, that was the plan. That was the idea. So I went and bought the local paper, found somebody that was selling a caravan locally (Laughs). I could, I had a tow bar on the back of Gladys but, to get it back, but the car didn't so - but the guy said that they would put a tow bar on the car, off an old car that they had. So long story short, we ended up, we had a car and a little tiny caravan. And we towed it and we got it back there. So Gladys died, basically. And so they decided to call my vehicle Sister of Gladys. That was the, her full title because she kind of replaced it and saved the day as it were. And erm, so that's, that's what they ended up with, as I say, the car and the little caravan. And the little caravan did work out to be quite a good, a good plan, really, because it helped them to dry stuff out and things like that.

Sounds like a very good solution!

Well, yes. I mean, it didn't cost me a fortune. But I had enough to - yeah, to do that. It erm, needs must, on these occasions. Kept them going. Hopefully kept them a bit more healthy in the winter, because I know a couple of the girls had

ended up in, in hospital with pneumonia a few times and things like that in the winter months.

When you were there Dawn, what was life like at the camp when you first arrived, and was it what you had expected it to be like?

Erm expected - I suppose because I'd known a number of women who have been there and been there backwards and forwards all over the years and had spent a lot of time there, I was it wasn't - no, I wasn't shocked or surprised or anything. What for me, and I know it was, it applied to the women that were there, it was, it was difficult was the erm, the fact that they were really low in numbers. And thereby felt very vulnerable at times. I mean, one night I was there, and I was asleep and there was a whole bunch of guys that had obviously gone past in some vehicles shouting abuse, and, you know, 'What you need is a good F-ing!' And all this, you know, really sort of abusive, nasty stuff. And other than myself, you know, at some, on some occasions, there were only a handful of women there, sometimes, at its lowest, which made them extremely vulnerable. You're safe - safety is in numbers obviously. So, so from that point of view, I was very much aware of that. Other than that, you know, life went on. They had the fire, they had their tents. As I say, they had been there for so many years, a lot of them erm, even if they weren't there permanently, they had been at that gate on and off for many, many years. That was the thing that really struck me was the, the determination and the commitment from some of the women. It wasn't just a weekend jolly, this was, this was serious commitment and I had great admiration for them. And if, you know, the bit I did helped them great, you know, but I know every time I did turn up they said, 'Oh great, you know, we're low on numbers Dawn, you know, we're glad to see you.' That kind of thing. So I went as often as I could really. I couldn't stay all the time, but I, I went as often as I could. And I was lucky, because I had my camper van, I could, I could stay in that.

Yes. And it sounded as though you had a very good relationship with the garage... and I just wondered, what was the relationship like with the local residents, or the military or the police?

Well the police and the military we know historically were pretty appalling really. I mean, they just had no tolerance for the women being there at all. And that was still going on. The women were, were convinced that they were zapped you know, this zapping was going on, which really caused them some distress and things. I think because I was there right at the end, they weren't ... the interaction was less. Although the girls were still coming in with the wire clip - I was looking after the erm fire, 'Dawn look, after the camp, keep the fire going. We're gonna go in and we'll be back shortly. If we don't come go and get help.' (Laughs) That kind of thing. But I mean, what you're supposed to do, I don't know. But you know, they were still active in a sense, but obviously pretty low key. There was any small numbers of women. Really, for me, most of the the unpleasantness and the things that had happened had occurred, they shared with me around the fire of an evening. But I already

knew a lot from my other friends who had spent time at Greenham and was very much more - you know, so I was very aware when I went there. But it was good to have the interaction with the women as well. And be part of it for the little bit I did, and a short time. So it was less than a year really, that I was going.

Yes, thank you. I understand there was some ladies from Japan that you became ...

Yeah. This was, this was quite amusing because we were all sitting round the fire. We'd had a bit of breakfast one morning, I was just sitting around chatting, having a cup of cup of tea. And suddenly these women and I - tiny women that were really much shorter than us turned up. We soon realised of course these women were actually Japanese. And when, we all kind of looked at each other, and then one of the women said, 'Oh my goodness.' And they had had a connection, a letter from some women in Japan, who had a peace camp there. And they'd heard about Greenham - well bearing in mind, there's no social, social... you know what I mean? You know, you had letters, you had newspapers, you had television, which we didn't have there was no electricity, obviously. Somehow they had heard about these, about Greenham and had said, 'We would like to come over.' And so of course, the girls just wrote back and said, 'Yeah anytime, come join us.' And they just turned up this particular day unexpectedly! And they said, 'What can we...' They came with their tents and their gear, and they just set up as a group. And I'm going to say that they, it was - obviously they had lived through the experience of nuclear, of a nuclear bomb, and you know, it's very real for them what we were doing here in England, even though we hadn't been affected. And the problem was they had literally no English. And I mean (Laughs) we didn't have any Japanese. So unfortunately, there wasn't a great deal of conversation. But the common purpose was there and they just wanted to see, come and see what, what Yellow Gate were doing and to be there and part of it and experience it. And, as I say, they were from a peace camp from - I'm going to say Hiroshima. I'm sure they were near there, if not, there itself and they had been for many years as well. So they just said, 'What can we do?' And so we said, 'Well, you know, just muck in.' Do - you know, nobody has any set jobs, everybody just does the ... 'You know, if you need to go to the loo and that's it sort of thing.' And then we got erm, what you see them pushing is actually, was a, some sort of contraption that they built to go to the standpipe and get fresh water. So what they were doing, they said, we'll go and get some water. And they said, well, it's up there. Da, da, da and off they went. And they came back duly with, with with these plastic containers with, with fresh water in. And, and that's that photo.

And so do you know how long they stayed at the camp?

No, I don't. They were still there when I left and they'd gone when I, when I went back. So, you know, it was only a matter of a week or two. They weren't there a great length of time. Erm, but yeah, it's quite quite quite interesting,

just experiencing them turning up and coming all that way just to experience Greenham. And it's quite extraordinary. I mean I know women did, at the height of Greenham come from all over the world, I'm aware of that. But to see them turn up when there was just Yellow Gate right at the end of it making this last stand as it were, and refusing to go until the weapons had gone. And erm, that's what they did do. But then when I said to the - I then had to leave because I had a plan to do this, this trip, this travelling. And so I had to stop going. But we knew that they were, they had a withdrawal date at that time. Erm, that they, that they were actually erm, the weapons were going and it was just closing. And there was one heck of a celebration. But I then said to these women, 'What's next? And they just said, 'Aldermaston.' (Laughs). So they weren't actually giving up even at that. They were going to then erm, see if the car and the caravan gets you there, you know, it's quite a trip. But the plan was to go there. And at that point, I was away for over a year. I travelled for over a year. So I kind of lost touch basically. So I don't know what happened after that.

And so I was interested when you said there was no organisation of jobs, and people just did - tell me how that worked.

I think the thing is, because they, they were small numbers, they'd been there that long, these women. They were all either permanent, virtually, or semi permanently there. Or whatever. Everything just fell into, into place. They didn't need to delegate. I'm sure if there was large numbers you would have to. But under the circumstances with smaller numbers, it wasn't really necessary. Everybody knew what needed doing. First up with the fire and so on. So they just went along. I think the other thing which is interesting, for me, is because there was a small number in particular, that their menstrual cycle fitted in completely with the phases of the moon.

Right. How interesting.

And they all, all their menstrual cycles all went with a phases of the moon. And they all had their periods at the same time. And literally within that, that same period. And I think that you know, things like that, just living outside, living under the moon, how nature erm came back. Not really anything necessarily to do with Greenham, but fascinating all the same. Yeah.

Interesting. Could you paint a picture for me about sitting around the fire or in an evening? And were you telling stories? Were you ...

Yeah, I mean it was about sharing. I mean, depending on the time of the year, obviously, I mean, I was there towards the end of the summer. So you know, the evenings kind of got pretty cold. So the fire was essential and you were very much, you know, it was blankets, big coats because it really did get cold. So it wasn't a late night that you are out really because the, there was no light, obviously, summer evenings, obviously would have been totally different in that sense, but erm yeah, it's just sharing things. But I think once

we sort of made some food and had eaten and a cup of tea or whatever, or somebody was fortunate enough to have beer, they might have had a beer or something. But that's about it really. It was just sharing, just sharing things. And especially for me, because I'm a bit of a curious person anyway. In as much as I want, I want to know, so I was kind of picking their brains a lot of the time I was there and saying, 'What was the Janet Heavener? How, how did you see that when that happened?' This woman that was killed there. And they were just so angry about that whole thing. And it was interesting to see their perspective on that. And various things that had happened that I was aware of, that I either read or heard from friends about erm - so yeah, there was lots of sharing of stuff. And they were interested in where I was going, because I was going to walk about with me backpack and going off and a woman of forty odd doing that, that's pretty unusual, Dawn, and I said, 'Yeah, there's not a lot normal about me in that sense.' You know, kind of, it was the first time in my life I had the opportunity to do it. And I thought right, do it. Before you're too old, and you can't do it. (Laughs). So that's what I did. And just sharing, talking, chatting. It's just lovely. Yeah.

And where were you off to? Where were you backpacking?

Well, I was starting in Canada. I had a cousin in Canada, and I had a couple of friends in Canada. So I started in Canada, I then had friends and my last stop and heavy due south, basically. And I went down into the state, Central America. And I have a cousin in in Oklahoma, where I got jabbed up because I was heading south. But the main part of it for me, the kind of backpacking bit started when I hit Central America. And that's where I spent most of my time. Erm, it was, yeah, all, seven countries in all that I did. And just sort of wandered with a one way ticket, no plans! Which was wonderful because I think, it's all very nice we all look forward to a holiday, but you've kind of got like this week slot or two week slot. And I hate that. (Laughs). And it was the first opportunity because I had been a single parent, for most of my son's life, you know you don't have these choices. We didn't have the money. We didn't have the choices - I didn't have the choice to do these things. So it wasn't until he was sort of, right okay he's doing his thing, he's left home and he's settled and dadada. And all he said when I said I wanted to do it, I wanted to go walkabout, he said, I said, 'How do you feel about it if I say I'm gonna go walkabout blah, blah? He said, 'Go for it Mum, not a problem. But can you ring me every ... can you get in touch every week, let me know where you are and that you're okay.' Because he didn't know where I was going to be any more than I did from week to week. So yeah, it was a year. So it was wonderful, had a great time. But yes, it was good because I think for the women at Greenham, you know, it was kind of interesting for them to hear about an output, or rather an input from somebody else that wasn't there all the time. And get some, something interesting from them as well, if they turned up. So likewise, if other women turned up if we were asking them about their life or what they were doing, you know, and had they been to Greenham in its height, and things like that. Just general chat really.

Yes. Oh, very courageous stuff - lone journey! What did your son think about you going to Greenham I wonder?

Oh, he was, he - well, I mean, he'd grown up with me working, I worked for over 11 years with Oxfam. So he grew up very much aware of my politics and my thoughts around the injustices and all the various stuff. I also dragged him along to the odd amnesty thing and things. So it was just part of who I was. So he was not at all surprised. But I mean, he was erm, an adult at that time. So erm no, wasn't surprised at all.

And I think, do you have some pictures of the murals done by Katarina?

I think you have received one of them haven't you?

Yes.

I gave one to Emma. Yeah, well, what that was, Katrina really was, I would say - I don't know if she saw herself as that. But I'm sure the others did very much, the king pin of Yellow Gate. She's the one that had been there the longest, had been there nine years. And she used to get sheeting or sailcloth or whatever, whenever she could afford. And she had like a washing line in between the trees and she would paint these wonderful big murals. They were stunning. And I was really impressed with them when I, when I got there and I thought these are amazing. And at that time, I was anticipating buying a little place that needed total refurbishment in, in Devon. And it had a big arch. And to sort of my, I said, 'If I gave you specific sort of sizes and things, could you do me two banners? Anything you want.' They were all women centred, obviously, but - these two. And she said, 'Oh I'd love to.' And I said obviously I will pay you and blah, blah, blah. And so she made these two banners for me. Well, I never did buy the place. But I've always had them. And when I was talking to Emma and I said about the photographs, she said, had you, have I got anything else? And I said, 'Well, I've got these, these banners.' I said, 'They're - I've been looking after them all these years. But I haven't actually gotten them up.' My place, this place where I'm living in now is so tiny. So erm, I said I have these two banners. Well, I explained one to a friend of mine who totally fell in love with them who came to see me. And I have a photograph of her. She's put it as she walks up her stairs to go to bed every night, there's this massive banner hanging down on the landing. So you know, you can see the thing in full. So she has that one, the other one I gave, which I'm happy to donate to Emma to give to you. So hopefully you've got that. But that, but her work was amazing. Like I just loved it. I mean, it made a little bit of money for her as well so, rather than just sort of needing money, she could earn, you know, a bit of money to help. You don't really get an income if you don't have an address, do you?

It's difficult isn't it?

Very hard. The financial side was always a struggle.

So why do you think the reason is that the Suffrage movement seems to have been celebrated and the Greenham movement hasn't received the same kind of celebration?

I think there's a mixed belief - within, within people I've heard many conversations with various people over the years. I mean, when I was a member of CND and I remember being on the marches and things, you will get a lot of support, but you'd also get a lot of erm, negative stuff from public and things like that. That what you were doing was wrong, and we need to defend their country. And so depending on the political - I think it's about politics, basically. Because I think the propaganda that was put out, especially at that time by governments was, you know, well, we've got to defend ourselves, and that's why they're here and all this business. So yeah, I think the, I think the public were divided, as I'm sure there was division in the, in the Suffragettes. I mean, not all - there was an anti-women's Suffragette movement as well wasn't there? It was quite rife down here actually. I work at my local museum, and they've got quite a lot of information about that here. Erm, and it's quite interesting. So, erm gosh. Half of America voted Trump didn't they? I mean, come on, you know, you're always going to have some, you know, a section of society, which will conflict with what, to me seems right, but for them isn't. And I think it's fear, a lot of it. A lot of it's fear based probably. I think the Suffragette, I mean, it was purely a male, male situation that, that the control was, was so dominantly erm governed women in that respect. But it was erm, it was just a different movement. I think for - I mean, having said that, I mean, the press, the media really went, went to the town on Greenham didn't they? They really covered it big time. Like I remember seeing it on the news and in the press some of it good, some not. So there's always going to be that split.

Do you think they gave fair coverage?

Do you know, I don't know that I can even remember it all. Erm, it was that long ago, I was, I would have been biassed anyway. And I'm a bit of a Guardian - if I'm going to buy a newspaper, it would be the Guardian. So erm, I'm a bit sort of, I'm always going to be toward the left. So it was really from a political angle, and I think really, when it comes to press and media, you politics play a big, big part in that. And when I think of what the government's were like in that, you know, the governments were like in that, at that point, at that time, they wouldn't have been at all supportive, obviously. So they would cast a shadow as much as they can, as they always have with women's issues I think. (Laughs). It's always been a struggle, and it always will be I think, so. As I said, with a friend, we were on a march in Exeter, not that long ago - covid has stopped us. But the Reclaim the Night march, you've probably heard of? About keeping women safe at night. And we were doing, we had a gathering and we did a lovely march in Exeter, the nearest city to where I live here in Devon and erm, they erm - we were, we were doing the march and everybody had had the opportunity to go in and make their own

banner - if they wanted - in the hall where we started. And people were writing their banners about keeping people, women safe at night, and the freedom for women. And one, er, and you'll have to excuse my language here because I need to swear because that's what she said. And she just put on her banner - but she's my age, well a bit bit younger than me, but she's kind of approaching, just approaching seventy. And she's got this banner and on it it says, 'I can't believe I'm still doing this fucking stuff.' Because, in many respects, although we've had a lot of changes, there hasn't been enough, you know. And erm, I mean the nuclear weapons poor old Scotland's got them - the stuff so, you know. Crazy. There you go. It's getting better but very slowly!

So your campaigning still goes on? I wonder if you think that the kind of, the the tactics for the Greenham campaign of non-violence, is there any learning to be taken from then to now in terms of the way protests are made do you think?

Well of course, there was violence. The bit that some women might have, might have gone a bit over the top at times. I mean, it basically was non-violent. But there were some women who didn't behave that well. Yellow Gate, were great sticklers to non-violence - totally across the board. They just wouldn't tolerate it. But I think in the heyday, there was a bit of naughty going on, from what I hear, I wasn't there. But no, the violence was, if there was violence was, you know, perpetrated by the other side. Well, of course, if the police are trying to, you know, if you're being man handled you're going to perhaps fight back, that kind of thing. I mean, that went on when, when I was on marches with CND and all sorts of other places. It's no different. The difference is the men, the police, on the whole, it didn't matter whether they were women, they still were quite brutal at times. They were handled very badly some of these women. They wouldn't just put them into a back of a van, they would literally physically throw them, and things like that. So the police behaviour was pretty appalling from what I hear. I didn't experience it. I wasn't there. It's what I've been told from other women. Personally, I'm a peaceful demonstrator. I don't like violence. I abhor violence of any kind, any type. So even though it's something I'm extremely passionate about, I might swear and shout at them, but I'm not going to be physically or destructive in any way other than that. I am responsible, sometimes swearing and being abusive, but that's about as far as my violence goes. Personally, that's my, my (Inaudible). And do I take a knee for Black Lives Matter? Yes I do. But it's peaceful demonstration. I don't like violence of any sort. Although I do understand why some people resort to it.

So how would you like Greenham to be celebrated?

I think the word resilience comes in for me because I was there toward the end with only a small number of women still defiantly being there all that time, with no intentions at all of giving up. It's that resilience I think, for me, and the, when you get a, when you get like minded women together, my goodness, they're powerful, and they're strong, and they're determined. And it's amazingly empowering. It's interesting because. for me at that time, going

travelling, the one thing that people kept saying - I remember being with some friends in the pub and you know, these, these, my friends saying, you know, 'Why are you doing this? Why now? What are you doing going off travelling on your own down into central America? El Salvador, Nicaragua, all these countries that they say are all dreadful, least of all Mexico.' So they said, 'Oh no, oh god.' You know. And I said, 'No, I'm going to do it. I want to do it, I've been putting it off.' And the guys were the funny thing because they were saying, 'That's really dangerous. You, you're going on your own?' So I said, 'Yes, I'm going on my own.' And they said, 'Well that's a bit dangerous, isn't it?' And I said, 'What's my biggest fear?' And they didn't want to say. I had to tell them, 'I said it's you guys, it's men on the whole. Whether it's a soldier, or a guy out, or somebody who's just short of money, or whatever.' As the backpacking woman on her own, the fear is fundamentally men. If I get sick, I've got insurance, you know. It's gonna be men on the whole. I said, 'You just don't want to say it.' And I said, 'If you think for one moment, that a man's gonna stop me doing what I want to do... No.' You know, that is not going to stop me. And I think these women at Greenham, they took a lot of abuse from the police. They took a lot of, you know, okay, the police had a job to do. I appreciate, you know, it's difficult. But the kind of man handling, the kind of behaviour that went on and the behaviour and the treatment that you got, if they got taken to Holloway as well, wasn't much better. And, and, you know, there are ways and ways of controlling people they have a job to do, but I think, you know, that kind of abusive behaviour is, is, is not on. The Suffragettes had it erm, and the Greenham women had it and experienced it. But yeah. It's the, just the resilience, you know, if you, if you're determined, you, you, you, you've just got to do it haven't you. Yeah, don't let anything stop you.

Wonderful message. And kind of looking forwards now, why do you think it is important that Greenham is remembered by future generations?

Yeah, it's more relevant, I think, as, if not more relevant today. The real threats, it's all to do with the whole nuclear thing. It's not just Greenham, Greenham is part of that, that group of determined people who are trying desperately - I mean, once upon a time, CND was quite powerful in this country. Nobody, young people don't hear about it today. They just don't hear about it. It's it's not something that's spoken about. Whereas, you know, as we know, he's '60s, '70s that era, you know, CND - alright, it was fashionable. But it was, it was also very active. Unfortunately, these things have just really - unless you get a body of people, and you get enough people to have enough power, to, to bring it to the attention of the media and things like that, that's what brings the numbers in. But today with social media, which we, because we didn't have in those days, it was just the press and TV or radio. Erm, today, I mean, I say this lightly, it's very easy to activate, you know, to get people active. But you've got to be so careful with that, because obviously, it can be a damaging thing because you're attracting, not necessarily like minded people you get people for the wrong reasons. So I think nuclear power, sadly, is here. The resistance isn't there from the public, for whatever

reason, younger people. I don't know. They just maybe just seem to accept it, the fact that it's part of life. And they're more I don't know, really. I don't mix with enough young people to be perfectly honest - I should. But I don't. So I haven't really discussed it with many young people and their attitude toward nuclear power, erm and the whole thing. I mean, we're building this we're supposed to be building this new station, aren't we for nuclear. You know, still, it's still very much ongoing. I don't, I honestly don't know. I honestly don't know. Because I don't think I'm as in touch with what's going on out there, as I used - I live in Sidmouth. There's so many elderly people here. So I, you know, there's a lovely Amnesty group and you know, we're still around. But my banner waving days are sort of coming toward an end now. I mean, I haven't got the energy to hold the thing up, least of all, anything else. So I think it's, it's down to young people, but there seems to be a bit of apathy out there. You just don't hear about any, you know, many people. I mean, I may be underplaying this. I may, there may be, I don't know, tens of hundreds of thousands of young people out there who are very - but I don't know, is really what I'm saying. Because I'm really not that in touch with young people. I should be, but I'm not.

Maybe in your museum, there'll be a little Greenham corner.

Oh, well, there is - no there's not a Greenham because we're local, of course. But as I say the Suffragette - we celebrated in the museum, the Suffragette movement, and their centenary, as in a couple of lovely home houses and bases with the National Trust did a grand job, I think on the Suffragette movement. Their centenary I thought was really good. So yeah, yeah, it's, it's - but I think that the Greenham - it's interesting that it, it always it take - it took women. And I think history has always I think supported the fact that if, if you want wars, it's men, and if you want peace, it's women. And it just seems that this is women's role. We are the, we try to make peace, don't we, on the whole. I won't say everybody. On the whole we try to make the peace and we want things nice, don't we? We don't want power in the same way on the whole and you know we're just seen as different, different beings I think for that reason. I think the fact that there were very few men there, really - I mean there were some men, obviously there were lots of men who supported the Suffragette movement. But you know, it was very much a women's centred thing, even though the men benefited from it.

Yeah.

As we know.

And there were many husbands who supported their wives. Many husbands and partners, who supported their wives at the camp.

Yeah.

Yeah. Did you ever meet, did you ever meet any of them?

Oh yeah. Over the years, I've met loads of women. I mean, you know, I through my connections with Oxfam, of course, we hated anything to do, you know, colleagues and things like that hated - it's just I, I wasn't allowed to get involved in that sense, but and be actively involved. I think they were worried I was gonna get arrested. And then they, 'Oh, gosh.' You know, bring Oxfam into it or something. They probably didn't trust me. So they, and the thing was, I was the hiring manager for central London. So I think because it was, everything was London centred as it still is, tends to be and so consequently, I think I was a little bit more volatile to to anything in the press. So yeah, yeah, it was difficult. It was, it was, it's difficult. But yes, loads of men were incredibly supportive. My son just sort of 'Yeah, well, you would, wouldn't you Mum.' Kind of thing because that's what I did. You know, because I could equally have been on a CND thing or something else, Greenpeace, all those, all those things that are trying to make it a better world for for people. But yeah.

So do you have any questions that you wish I might have asked, that you would like to answer?

The only thing that was incredibly futile that went on, I think was the behaviour of the local council and the bailiffs really. But again, it was probably a legal thing they were, they were going through this process of turning up every week, you know, uninvited and just turving the women off the land. You have to physically remove everything, otherwise they will take it. And they used to come with this, this open back truck wire cage trap which you know they use for clearing rubbish I suppose around the borough. And they turn up uninvited, toot their horn to let, you know, sometimes early in the morning, women weren't even up and they'd have to scramble. And they'd only give them so much time to clear everything off the land and drive the vehicles off and everything. You know they weren't about to leave them in peace at all. And I think that was even be right up the end. So even right up to when I was there. You know, it just seemed rather futile and petty. They weren't doing, doing anything wrong by being there. But that could have been, and I think we did discuss this because I said this is ridiculous. Why are they doing... and they all said, 'Oh they come...' You know, when I first started going there, 'Oh they come every, about every week Dawn they just turn up and toot their horn early in the morning and make us take down the tents.' And then they would just kick out the fire and put the fire out, petty really. You know, but I do remember discussing it. Well, it's probably a bylaw, which you know, laws do, you know as much as they were sort of, if you like tolerating them staying still being there, technically, they could come and they legally were allowed to come and do this thing every now and again. Which was also very unpleasant. But yeah, they women were used to them doing it for years. It's just something they accepted, they'd have to be done.

And presumably, they then had to relight the fire and set up the camp again.

Yeah, and these guys, I mean, you know, they knew that's exactly what would happen, but still they'd come and do this thing every - about every week, whenever, you know. It was usually as I say early in the morning, which was almost like they did it on purpose, you know, we'll come get them out, you know, half the time I mean they were still asleep. So yeah. Yeah. But as you know, they had a job to do. I mean, it wasn't their fault, somebody you've made the decision, not them, I suppose.

And so finally then, how would you sum up your Greenham experience reflecting on it now?

I think for women and I think for a lot of women, I don't know, I can't speak for the other women but I know I have heard it said and I've said it myself in the past, I think it's quite - when you, whenever you get a solid, kind of solidarity in a group of women together you it's an empowering thing. Um, that's why I think it's important not to have violence and to be you know, very much a non-violent - because you put a gang of human beings together, and they're angry, you know, sometimes they don't behave, how personally I feel they they should and so, I think passive non-violent demonstrations and such are great. I've done it all my life one way and another for various things. And I think yeah. I think like anger say, but you do find people being very angry. But for me personally, I just found it very empowering and wonderful to see how strong women can be. And how, as I say, that word resilience for me is something and determined women can be when, when they're together. We've always - as people were saying to me when I went backpacking - you're very vulnerable on your own. But, you know, how can you do that? But it's very obvious when there's a group of women, they are extremely powerful. And those women were powerful, resilient, determined, all those things and, and it's a wonderful energy. I felt very privileged to be, as much as it was only a small part, part of it. Yeah, I'll never forget, it was great. I do wonder where those women on there, what they're doing and how they are. Were they, a bit younger than me. I was forty. What would I have been forty-one or something like that. So some of them are quite a bit, you know, a little bit younger than me, although they weren't youngsters. They weren't young, young. They weren't teenagers. But yeah. It'd be interesting to know, if they did get to Aldermaston and carry on they're determined fight there. Very privileged to be there.

Right. That's a wonderful note to end on. If you have nothing else that you wish to add and so, I'd like to say thank you very much for taking this time and sharing your story.