

Jeanne Diamond

So how are you? What time of day - about ...

It's eight-thirty at night, quarter to nine at nine.

Oh, right. It's cracking on then.

Yeah. I had a coffee at four so I'm fine.

We could start with like, actually, how did you hear about Greenham? You know, how did you get involved? That's a different thread for everybody. And a little bit about your, your sort of family background, did they encourage you, you know, but as much as you want to, prepared to share on the, on the website.

Well, I've been politically active since, oh I don't know when I was thirteen, or fifteen, or something. So in the States, around open housing and civil rights, and, but then I got very involved with anti-Vietnam War stuff and the whole - and I was a pacifist from, like as soon as I understood about war, there was something in me that said there has to be a better way than this. And then - and nuclear power as well. Certainly nuclear weapons - because I was born just before Hiroshima. And I always feel it's really part of my karma that I knew a nuclear free world. I mean, they was, they were already testing it. I was born in July. And I just felt that it was better, you know, not to go down that path. So I was very much embedded in a, in a peace movement in the States and in, in an anti-war movement in the States. And so I came to England in either '72 or '74, I can't even - or '68, maybe '68. Anyway. And immediately got involved with the anti-Vietnam stuff. And so I was already - anyway, by the time Greenham was starting there was Women for Life on Earth. And I did a an article in - there was a Leonie Caldicott and Stephanie, whatever her name was did, yeah. They did 'Women Speak out for life on Earth', for the Women's Press in 1983. And I did an article called as per chapter called 'Gaia: The Earth is our Spiritual Heritage'. So it's already - and there were, you know, there were peace groups all over the country at that time. And so I was in the one in Shepton Mallet, and Mike Eavis who ran Glastonbury Festival used to come to that one, which is part of how I knew him to get the Women's Music Festival on his farm, by which time I was living in Fay Weldon's, which was kind of over the road to Michael's farm. So that was that connection. Anyway. So there was a Glastonbury, or Bristol Women for Life on Earth group or Women for Peace Group. And one of the women in that group said to me, 'Look, there's a peace camp down at Newbury, let's get some food down to them.' So we took some food down to them, just - and it was still then a mixed camp. So we got down and it's like, 'Excuse me, you said this was a women's camp.' They said, 'Well, it's a women's initiative.' So that pissed me off. But then about eight months later, they did kick the men out because they wouldn't do the housework. And there was a little bit of sexual harassment going on. So they wouldn't do the dishes is the main story that I heard, which was why they were asked to leave. (Laughs). And they, you

know, of course, got violent when they were asked to leave, but they did leave. And then it became a women's camp. And so I started going down there, and I started going down there just before they danced on the silos. I'd been visiting like that November and then I just missed that. And so that January, after the dancing on the silos, I went down there to move. Because I was at a space in my life where, where it was possible. I didn't have a full time job. And I really, I loved the idea of living out, and I really love the idea of living with women. And I love the idea of working for peace. So it all came together in a really nice way. And one of my fondest memories, about 18 months later, I don't know, you know how people used to stop by all the time and talk to us. And this couple stopped and they got out of their car, they came over, they pressed money into my hand and they said, 'Bless you!' And I thought this is the way to earn a living! Just an ordinary middle class couple very grateful for what we were doing. So um, so I moved down there and there was only Yellow Gate when I moved down there in '82. But, um, and then they opened up Green Gate, and then there were more and more gates. So I erm, there were these two pictures, I was trying to remember the dates, and I got very confused about the dates. So I had to go into the cupboard under the stairs. So this was a picture of me that was in the Sunday Colour Supplement.

Is that you! God!

Yeah, that's me in the current Sunday Colour Supplement that Martha Gellhorn, remember Martha Gellhorn?

Yeah.

She did an article in the Sunday Observer.

Oh nice!

'Martha Gellhorn meets the Greenham Women: the veteran war correspondent visits peace camp.' And so she did that article in that picture that was in that article. And I was trying, so that was 1984, October, February of '84. Okay?

Yeah.

And then the best action that I did was, it was April of '84. And I don't know if you remember this. I was very proud of this. So this was Remembrance Sunday and Karen Silkwood.

Yeah, I remember it

(Inaudible) who killed Karen Silkwood. And it was such a great demo to put together because there was like card and coloured pen and everybody whiting up their faces. It was so inexpensive, and to organise, it just took a bit

of time to - but really simple, you know, and it fell on a date and Paula the photographer was there. So she took this photo. And then that was in, that, and that was the year that Cher came out with the movie about Silkwood. So that was in this one. Which was April of '84. '84 was my media year so that was fun.

Yeah. Yeah. Didn't you do a dirty protest or a naked protest or something as well? You covered your body, body in fire ash?

That wasn't me.

That wasn't you.

It wasn't me. I did a naked - so when we had the women's festival, at the Green Gate, there at Michael Eavis' farm, there were people left over from the Green Gathering who wouldn't leave. So I went around, actually with the woman I'm married to now, but just, she was the only one who would yeah - she was the only one who would support me because I went around naked, nothing to hide, saying, 'Please leave. We're gonna have a women's festival now.' And they all left.

Was that the Women's International Summer Event?

Yeah.

Yeah, I was, I was at that.

Yeah. So that was great. So that was like what we did just before I moved to Greenham. So it was a good - astrologically as well, it was a very rich time. There was a lot of great stuff happening.

Yeah. Okay, I'm going to show you something you may or may not want to comment.

Oh yes! (Laughs). Oh dear. And do you have the pink insert about women's land?

Yeah, that was a ... Yes! Yeah, I have, yep.

This was a sad little story. Anyway, so I wanted to buy this Scottish Island and the Laird was going to sell it. And this - we would have 30,000 women coming to the camp and I wanted to give this little leaflet to them. But, you know, the publisher was late with it, so I didn't have it to give them. But I'm glad I'm not living on a windy Scottish island now I'll tell you! (Laughs).

(Laughs). Well there's plenty of free electricity out there these days!

So yeah, so that was - and I had to read that to remember when I went to the camp and everything so ... Yeah, a lot of activity, a lot of stuff going on and you know.

Yeah, yeah.

Oh, yeah. Let's go -

So now I can dredge up a few more questions like, 'What was your favourite thing that camp and what was your least favourite is thing at Camp?'

Oh ... there are lots of favourite things. I think I liked the rituals and the drumming. I really loved, you know, when, when we were all together and raising the energy to do, to be really affected. One of my favourite things was I used to go into the base to meditate. you know, there were there were a number of slices in the in the wire here and there all around the base. And I would just go in through one of them and sit in the trees and meditate and I used to really like that and do that whole peace meditation and, and, you know, we used to try to do these visualisations that the police would you know, take their hats off and wear pink shirts. And, you know, and I'd love that when they'd like take their hat - I really, zooming in and I take the hats off. You know, I used, just silly stuff like that. Or, you know, I'd start drumming and the marines would shut the gates because they knew that something was coming. (Laughs). So that's just, that's playful things. But when we were putting together it was really, it was fantastic. I loved living out. I had a great time in prison. I was only there for a week. And I made a complaint against the priest because they put us in a, they put me in a remand cell with two other women longer than you're supposed to be there. And for one reason, the two women were not there. And I was there on my own and the priest came to see me. And he put his hand through the hole, and he pressed on my head. And I decided that that was abusive. I made a complaint. And I'm a Greenham Woman, we can do no wrong. And we're on the front page of paper every day. And erm, and so they take me to a deputy whatever they're called, a deputy - what do they call governor, deputy governor, who says, 'If you don't withdraw this complaint, we are going to take away your two days of remand. So you'll have to say two more days in prison. And we don't believe you.' Well, but you know, it's a big deal to most people. So I said, 'Well, sorry, I'm not withdrawing my complaint, he was wrong.' So they sent me back to the cell, take me to another deputy governor, same threat. 'Sorry, I'm a Greenham Woman, I'm not withdrawing my complaint. Take me back to the cell.' So take me to see another deputy governor, I do it again, take me back to my cell. Then they take me out and the governor herself - and I would swear to you, her girlfriend - come down to see me and say, 'We are ever so sorry. We will look into this and we assure you it will never happen again.' So that was a good mark. I liked that. And then they moved me into my regular cell with me and one other Greenham Woman and three or five other women in the cell I don't know, or however other many there were, this was up at Holloway. And for some reason there was paper in the cell and so I made a

deck of tarot cards. You know, there's never paper in a cell. There was paper and pen. I made a deck of tarot cards and I read tarot for all these women. I had a great time.

Yeah.

Because we were so invincible.

Yeah.

You know if I'd been on my own, I would have been terrified. I ran into, there was a woman who used to come visit the camp, who was working class (Inaudible). And there was a woman at the camp who was an arrogant nasty little prick. And she didn't like me, and she really didn't like this woman. And, you know, and I thought this woman was fine. You know, she was, she had a troubled life, you know, and she'd come to the camp, like to be with women and have a bit of a meal, have a bit of a rest. Anyway, I ran into her in prison. And you know, because she, you know, that's the kind of like she had. And we were all, 'Oh hi! How're you doing Pauline?' You know we had a big hug and everything. So we're having lunch together. And she wants a second helping of potatoes. And you know, this poor woman her life, you know, they weren't going to give her that second helping potatoes! So she goes up to the guard for the second helping and the guards like, 'Argh, not for you, Pauline!' And I just looked at this guard and say, 'Oh come on, give the woman some potatoes!' They give her another helping of potatoes. So I just love that there were these little (Inaudible) in a little in the moment. I mean, it didn't change the world. But you know, Pauline got a second healthy potatoes that day, and I just loved it.

Yeah, yeah.

So ...

So the least favourite? The least favourite thing?

Lest favourite, I would say the least favourite was that woman who tried to block me all the fucking time! She hated my drumming. She was always trying to silence me. I mean, really, all the rest of it was just like the helicopters flying really low was, was not wonderful. Let me see. I mean, you know how everybody's so horrible about Margaret Thatcher and trying to say that she wasn't even a woman. It was Margaret Thatcher who said those helicopters should not fly so low. Those woman have a right to sleep. I mean, you know, she did her little humane things now and again, you know. So I didn't really have terrible experiences. It used to piss me off that when people would bring donations of food, it was all alcohol and sugar. And you really had to train people and I would just say to people, 'Can we have some food please? We actually live here. We don't need treats. We need food.' You know.

So, I mean particularly in, in the early days when there was mainly, really only Yellow Gate, there was a lot of press - well you've just shown us some examples of press coverage. And I wondered how you, how you felt about the the relationship with the press? Local press as well as national and international press.

Well, as I say we were on the front page of the paper for months, maybe a year and a half. And the reporters used to say they'd been in, somewhere in the Middle East, where they were fighting, which is- I'm blanking out now. And then Belfast, and then Greenham. We were on that reporters, you know, I felt that the reporters were pretty respectful on the whole. And it was wonderful to get - I mean, I'd been trying to get, you know, from being in the peace movement for years and years and years, it's very hard to get decent coverage, you know. And for some reason, and I think, partly because of, I don't think it's so much the case now, but the right to protest and the respect for our right to do that, and for our right to be, to be safe. I mean, you said, or I read somewhere in the history of Greenham that one woman died. And again, Margaret Thatcher spoke up and said, you know, 'These women are not to be murdered. That's not what we're after.' You know, 'Yes, I dislike them being there, and I want them to leave the common, but I'm not calling for them to be murdered.'

Yeah.

And you know, that was, people had no idea how much of a difference that made. I mean, you look at Trump, and you can see how much of a difference it makes. If you've got the leader of the company - country calling for us to be assassinated, that would have been very different, you know. And she was actually respectful of our humanity, politically, bazillion miles apart, but very respectful of our humanity. And I appreciated that. I'll tell you the other thing, my least favourite part of the camp, actually. So I was friends with this woman in London, who's a single mother had a daughter. And the daughter was teetering on the edge of purpose in life, and Greenham was so inspiring. And so she came down to the camp, her mother and the girl came down to the camp with me one day, looking for inspiration. And she got us into the bender of the woman her own age. And they are all drinking alcohol and eating potato crisps and talking shit. And I was so disappointed. And this young woman went back to London and became an alcoholic. You know, I mean, she might have done that anyway. But if she'd been able to pick up some inspiration, which was what we were like in the beginning - before we were a safe place for runaways, when we were actually, you had to be really committed to this cause to get your ass down here put up with these conditions. I think that was my saddest moment was to see that, that the, the magic and the and the beauty and the inspiration was gone. It was politically, as a political action, it was great. And it stayed great. But it was something very special at the beginning. You know, it's hard to scale that stuff up anyway, which we are learning now.

I mean, that's, that was something that I, I particularly remember you, you, I wondered if you'd talk a bit about the whole sort of ritual magic goddess - well it was quite exploratory as well, that for me, that's one of the sort of focus things that I remember you for.

Ah ha. What was wonderful, I mean, the potential - I mean, there were a number of women at the camp in the early days, after it became women only because I don't, I can't speak about before then. Up until shortly after the thirty-thousand women event, when we became very popular, when there was a tremendous belief and understanding about the psychic power in the universe, and how one can tap into it. And also a very strong understanding of our psychic reality as women. And what we brought as women on a piece of Earth that we were determined to treat with respect. I mean, there was so many ecological practices that we all engaged in, we all brought from our own knowledge, we all engaged in, in different ways all around the gate, all around the base. It, you know, if there was an energy that rose on that,. And, and we did all the songs that we did. I mean the songs of Greenham Women everywhere doesn't, doesn't quite do it for me. There was a, there was a, there were a number of songs that we sang, some of which came from the wiccan movement, about an ecological movement about with every step I take, about the sacred earth, about everything she touches, changes, everything changes, you know, all those. Just all of those - there was so much consciousness around working and astrologically '83 was about like what it's just been with that convergence that's just happened now in '21. I think it's the first, in between this I don't think there's been such a strong astrological time. It was possible to do so much. And people were willing. And I'd been, I mean, okay, so, way back, you know, I used to go to the Theosophical Society. And you know, I, I'd had auto training at the College of psychic studies. And, you know, I'd had a whole lot of occult training here and there, plus a really strong meditation practice, and plus I'd been training witches. (Inaudible) had asked me to train a group of witches for the matriarchy network. So, you know, I brought all of that. And I'd been, yeah I brought all of that to the, to the camp. And women were just really open to it. And it's like, 'Oh, yeah, please! You know, 'Let's get together and do some of that!' And so we'd get together and we'd sing and we'd drum and we'd, you know, do visualisations to make positive things happen. So like when I first got there, there was one bloke living in the, in the bushes just outside Yellow Gate. And there was a debate about, 'We have to visualise getting rid of him! Tying him up and grr!' Yeah. I said, 'Can we just visualise that he finds somewhere better to be? And he just decided to leave?' And they said, 'Okay, we'll try that.' And you know, after three days, he was gone. No fuss, no aggro, lots of non-violence, lots of love and compassion, you know, and just reminding people how to come from compassion and peace, we're supposed to be about peace. So how can we get what we want in a peaceful way? And that was the other thing that was so unfortunate about Wages For Housework. They just didn't, but then, it could get a foothold because, I mean, I love them. But all those teenage girls with no vision, except, you know, sex and drugs, and rock and roll, brought the vibe down. I mean, they deserved a safe place

to be, and hopefully they went on ahead, better life and all that. But they did bring the vibe down.

Things, things, things don't stay the same. Change is constant things, have to evolve. And possibly, without, without those women, things might have packed up earlier, you know. I mean, it was, you know, I spent most of my time, at Blue Gate in the end, you know, when when Blue, because Blue Gate was one of the permanent camps apart from Yellow. I mean, a lot of the other gates were, they came and went, you know, whenever there was enough women that were there. Especially in a big space, like Orange Gate, you were very exposed at Orange gate, and right off the road, you needed to feel there were enough of you to be safe.

And there were a lot of those women at Blue Gate that you talk about. I mean, I loved them, and they were fantastic. But high vibration, not necessarily.

Yeah, yeah, I agree. I used to sort of, once I had my truck I used to escape to Green Gate for a break. (Laughs). But yeah, so sort of tied up a bit with self harm and, you know, like, you're trying to look after the land, but you're abusing your own body.

Exactly. Exactly, exactly. I mean, if we could do a catalogue of the mental health issues on the common and how we were dealing with them, you know. And I think that it was in its own way, it probably saved a number of women from suicide, actually. To be able to live out in a in a really positive relationship with nature. You got fed whether you - and you didn't have to go to work and turn out and suit up and put up with that crap. You know, I mean, I think it was a wonderful thing. But it didn't keep its magical potential. Because magic requires a particular discipline. And a number of people who were willing to - the percentage of people that were willing to do that discipline declined, as you know. And this is a continual issue about scaling up. I mean, you see it happen with mindfulness now. Back in the day when it was exotic, people did it who had the discipline. Now, you know, everybody's teaching mindfulness and nobody fucking remembers what it is and hardly anybody's actually meditating!

Yeah, yeah.

Things change.

Yeah. And a lot of the time the change is a commodification.

Exactly! Exactly. I mean, how we dressed to Greenham then when I saw it, you know, in the fashion magazines five years later, like bloody hell! You know.

What, what do you mean that our style of dress got com -

Yeah, yeah.

Got commodified. Yeah.

Absolutely! Absolutely. As if that was the whole thing.

Yeah. Yeah. So, so, a couple of questions around impact. So what do you feel was the impact of camp on your life after camp and then the impacts that, you know, the legacy of Greenham what was the ultimately the legacy of Greenham?

Well, I would say the legacy of Greenham was all these demonstrations with everybody holding hands and circling things. But can we have a new another new idea please? It's getting really stale. It was great when we dreamed it up. And now like everybody everywhere is doing it as if it's gonna make a difference. Partly it made a difference because it was infused with that energy that I was just talking about, you know. But that I think, is the biggest legacy. Also the right of women to organise together, I think we gave that a big boost. And that's, you know, still around. So, I think that's been basically about all the legacy in the world unfortunately. I would be hard pressed to think that there's more than that as a legacy at the moment just given how I think we're heading for war, and it just looks really pretty bad. And I don't see any long lasting impact of that. On me personally, it was life, you know, we used to run into each other and say, Is there life after Greenham? It took about three years, it was hard. And I'm not quite sure why - I mean, so it's hard to erm, it was hard to do without each other. There were a lot of us, you know, there were always you know, it was lovely. And there were enough people there, you know, the ones you didn't get on with, you didn't have to - once there were more gates and everything. Brilliant people. Erm, it gave me a prison record. I would say the most personal impact has been my prison record. Because every time I've wanted to change countries, because I have - okay, so I remember the white Russians being stateless and couldn't, not being able to go anywhere because they didn't have any documents. And I knew that documents weren't going to go away, even though that would have been my preference at the time, wouldn't be my preference now. So I decided to get as many nationalities as I could. So I have four now. And every time I wanted a new nationality, I had to go through this whole palaver about my prison record, and explain it, and hope that it wouldn't keep me from getting my nationality - which it always could, anytime. So that was, that was the biggest personal impact. And certain jobs as well you have to put down. So that was, that was, that's been the most personal erm, negative impact. Positively, um had a great time. I think it was that in that sense of, of self realisation, and self efficacy to have that, you know, two and a half years of validation was very, it has stayed with me all my life. It's very hard now to intimidate me. It's like, I might say, 'Oh, well, I'm not gonna bother fighting you, have it your way.' But, you know, that belief that, you know, if we want to, and if we're right - it's much harder being alone, for sure. And since I've been in Australia, I have been very alone. So I don't struggle - I don't try to make much change now - a little bit. And I think that whole thing about believing in compassion and believing, you know, like, I remember my trial. I had two or three trials when I

was convicted. And you know, the detective who arrested me wouldn't lie. And instead of which she fainted in the witness box. It's like, 'Thank you, dear, that was nice.' You know. So just those kind of positive that if you have enough, this interest in compassion, it can reach, it can touch people, you know, it can bring out the best in other people as well. And I was always glad to see that. So, and then - I loved living in a bender and I think I have some ideas still of how to build one. And so after, in '91, long after, I went back to the States, and my mother took me to the local park, which had built a bender like a wigwam. She just said, 'Oh go,' you know, 'When you get fed up with the city, go for a walk in this park.' It's up in the mountains there. And there was this bender sitting in there. And the first time I went in there, right, it was amazing! I heard all the voices of the Greenham Women. It was astounding! You know, it was, it was amazing. I think that happened twice and then by the third time I went there, they'd been used, they'd gone already. It was amazing, you know. So I think I, I mean, I don't know if I learned some stuff that had stayed with me about living out. But I just loved it. And I learned a lot about temperature. I remember, so I used to have when I was a Green Gate I was sleeping on a bale of hay, which was positioned so it was actually in a winter, and it was winter, and it was snowing, and I was not cold! You know, it's like, that it really taught me a lot about the body and you know, what you can do if, you know. It's like, you get so cold that you stop being cold, while still not freezing to death, you know? So just stuff like that, that I learnt about, about the boundary, about what's possible. You know. It was wonderful.

I was erm, once I'd got my, I bought my first truck in 1986. So, because the evictions were like mega, and I wanted to be at camp a lot more. And nobody would come and sit in the truck with me because I had a burner, and they didn't want to get warm, because they'd feel the cold when they went back out! (Laughs).

Exactly, exactly! Yeah. Yeah. So it was just nice learning all that stuff.

Yeah. I wouldn't want to do it now though!

Well, right.

So, before I think the recording started, but we just sort of touched on the whole issue around class and race at camp. I mean, there's I, yeah, I won't, I won't say any more it's your interview, you say what comments you'd like to make around that

...

Well, speaking from my perspective, now, I would say that white women's moment was really brief. And nobody credited us for all the bloody hard work we did and all the risks we took, somehow, because we're white and because we can read and because we can put together sentences with words, the three syllables were baddies, and I'm sick of it! I'm really, really sick of it. Women who saw the need, and who could find the space in their lives, went down there. Now, you know, sure it appealed to a particular lot. But you know, there was one woman who came down and managed to keep kosher the

whole bloody time. If we're going to talk about minorities, it's not just skin colour. You know, I mean, I just get sick of it. You know, who knows what all the ethnic backgrounds were of everybody there? These were people with a passion and a commitment, and it is not honoured because we don't tick a particular identity box. And I think that's a shame. You know, and I'm sorry, but if you look at feminist movements around the world, they are generally started by academic women, because they're the ones who have the time to reflect on the nature of oppression. Yes, of course, they're not so busy with all the bloody oppressions, you know, that socialist model about, you know, if you didn't have the women doing the housework, you know, nobody can go out to go fight the war. I get that, you know. But, I mean, that's why I'm doing my PhD on educated women, because we don't count for nothing! We gave our lives to these causes. And I believe that we should be acknowledged for that. Yes, there are limitations. Okay. I don't see the Communist Party being good to lesbians, being good to Jews, being good to academics. I mean, you know, come on! What happened to the concept of, excuse me for the gender, but the family of man? You know, I mean, I was brought up on that, you know, we shall overcome, we're all in this together. What ever happened to being in it together?

Yeah.

So, you know, I don't think, I think there was a lot of class spectrum at the camp. There was certainly a lot of age spectrum at the camp, and a lot of education spectrum at the camp and a lot of religious diversity at the camp, reflective of Britain at the time. And there were probably some women of colour who may have chose to keep it quiet because the society was racist, not because the camp was racist. You know, and we've got a long way to go. Why always pick on, you know, the people trying the hardest? I just makes me sad. Yeah. And it was, it certainly wasn't, as far as I know, wasn't closed to anybody. But you know, like, the black feminist friends I had, peace wasn't their issue. So they didn't come down. But they went on demos that weren't my issue. You know, we couldn't all take care of the same business, there's a hell of a lot of business to be taken care of. You know, somebody's got to save the whales. I mean, you know, you just do the thing that is your thing.

Yeah. Yeah.

So ...

And even, even doing that you still actually end up being, facing quite a lot of challenges.

Exactly.

It's personal personal challenges that you push through.

Exactly.

And as you said, with living like more communally and not being on your own, you can push through a hell of a lot more in a, basically, a supportive environment. And, and the whole issue around consensus is that you do, you don't have to agree, you know, you don't all come from it from from the same point of view. And, you know, one of the things that I've, I've repeatedly said is that at night, especially once we have to start doing night-watch, because of vigilantes, but also, cruise coming out of the base, you know, we're doing twenty-four hour watch for that, the erm, the consciousness raising that went on, privately, in the dark, maybe with women that are just there for a few days, it was almost like hitchhiking. People would tell you their stories, because you're in their car for half an hour that you know that they'd never talk about those things to their friends. But the consciousness raising was - it was organic consciousness raising. I'd been in a CR group in Somerset before I started getting into camp. But, so I knew what that looked like and, and I actually think it was, well, when a lot of women started to hear how we weren't the only one that had experienced racism, incest, or sexual abuse from the priest.

Right, right.

And that was, it's not literally a Greenham legacy, but it was part of the beginning of revealing women, revealing the the endemic nature of that level of sexual oppression, based on our sex that women and girls it was, we didn't even see it. I mean, they're talking about that now, you know.

Right, right, right. Yeah, the other, the other consciousness raising that went on, and I'd like to just give a shout out to those local women who came and offered us a bath. Do you want to come to my house and have a bath? I mean, they had to be so brave. We were, the way we were portrayed, as you know, wild women. I mean, even if we were given our dignity by Margaret Thatcher, the press still, you know, these are, take, women taking us into their homes and letting us use their towels and their bathtubs, you know. And for me, I mean, I couldn't go comfortably more than about ten days without a bath, maybe three weeks at a push. And that a woman would come and say, 'Do you, would you like to come to the house and have a bath?' That was fantastic. And these were Newbury women, you know, and the other Newbury woman who interviewed me who said, you know, she used to bring a bag of groceries - now that would have been real food. Those women were heroines. And they had to it because Newbury was not open to us. I mean, Newbury was pretty hostile. You know, men in pinstripe suits used to bump into me when I went into town, you know. So I think that as well, it was a consciousness raising for them to have the opportunity to chat to us one on one when we went for both. These little women on women, these - I agree with you, there's a lot of, you know ... And we'll never be called in a way, but impacted lives.

Yeah. Yeah.

So no, I remember some of those women from Blue Gate and Blue Gate. I have to say, a lot of women who were attracted there had had some very hard times.

Absolutely. Yeah, yeah. I mean, it, you know, at times, it was like running a refuge. Without, without any skills or facilities, you know?

Yeah. It felt like it.

But, but there was a lot of mutual support, you know, and ...

And there was a lot of love, but, but I just remember, you know, women getting into screaming matches at a particular point in a lovemaking session, because it would trigger a memory.

Yeah.

You know, there was so much pain.

Yeah. Yeah. Um, have you got any other things you want to mention?

Well, of course, I took all those questions. And I went through them and I made a whole list of things. And so I'm sure there's a gazillion more things. I feel like well, this is a good intro. Oh Ray, I mean, there's just so much I think - yeah there, I mean, yeah, I'd like to talk about I mean if we had another interview I'd talk about our relationship with the Police who came down as opposed to the press, the politicians who came down and the Hells Angels and how we dealt with them and you know, it's ... the miners and what was like, we were we were there during the Miners Strike, and what that was all about so I think there's some things to be said out all that. There was a great, I was really, really glad to have the opportunity and I have to say, you know, I was at a point in my life where I could do that. I was not paying a mortgage. So I could, you know, I could leave, I could just have, I was just making the transition to opening a private practice. You know. I really wanted to live out, and I really wanted to live with him. And and I really, at that time, still believed - well, we did get rid of the missiles on the base, that we could do that. That was good. We didn't stop war, you know, at all. We didn't really raise consciousness in the general public about war and about nuclear war and about the patriarchy! I mean, I think that what's happening now, the patriarchy is fighting back, you know, it's just, it's horrible. But anyway, it was a great experience and I loved it. And I'm not sure I was very self reflective at the time, because there was so much going on.

Because you talked a bit about the food and the problem with the alcohol around the impact on your, your health. Erm you said, you didn't have time for self reflection. So, you know, for me, like, especially at Blue Gate with, when it was really a lot of like, sometimes we get evicted twice a day. Living off your, your living off your adrenaline, you know, they had a full time team of bailiffs, we never knew

which gate was gonna get the eight o'clock eviction. And the impact on your - you're living off adrenaline, you know, and long term, at the time you know, it's a great buzz. But long term, it's, it's had a lot of impact on a lot of us.

Well, I think that the weapons testing on us, the vibration weapons like you're being used at the embassy in Havana now, I think - I mean, I cannot - so you know, I don't know if you've seen these ads for old people. It's where they sent an electric current up your legs to get your circulation going, I cannot use it, it upsets my stomach terribly. That's a legacy of those, that weapons testing. You know, I cannot eat microwave food. I mean, you know, the sensitivity they ruined - I mean, that was very, very destructive. The health part, I used to go home about every three months and have you know, three days of saunas and, you know, a week of decent food. And I was pretty healthy when I got there. I don't, I think - oh and at Green Gate of course, Teresa, who was a chef used to cook beautiful, healthy food. So I didn't eat that badly at Greenham. But the but the way they, the weapons they tested on us ruined my nervous system for sure. For sure. And I came with a really robust one, so the ones who didn't I can't imagine.

I know quite a few women that have had thyroid problems. And they felt that that's been through the zapping.

Yeah, yeah. That was terrible.

Did you, do did you do much Greenham Women everywhere stuff outside of Greenham like did you go on the walks on the plane and that sort of thing?

Yeah. Well, we could talk about that. We should really talk again about that, because we were touring all over the world.

Yeah.

You know, and all that. There was a lot going on. We went out, that's when that's when I went up to Orkney's and the Shetlands had a lovely time, went to Finland. That was all really important. I mean, I was pretty Greenham based. so I didn't really do - but, but the travelling I did for Greenham was mainly for talking, for speaking, abroad and all around England, which was really important.

And there was a London Greenham house which supported women coming out of Holloway. Were you ...

Yeah, yeah, I was there as well. And there was a house in Newbury as well, that a woman that let us use a lot - I can't remember her name. So yeah, I mean, so it was a Greenham life for, you know, half a dozen years. And so it's always hard to detach from that and to start doing something else. And I think it was as hard to find a new direction as anything. So I got involved with Ova with Gianna, who was an Ova. And so that kind of took over for a bit, I could

travel around with them. And you know, I didn't need a personal direction for a bit. And I remember flying into, just after Chernobyl, flying into Switzerland, into the cloud. And it was the most silent airline waiting room I'd ever been in because we were all had our own reasons to fly into the nuclear cloud that everybody was running away from. You know, I drank a lot of miso and used a lot of rescue Remedy and, you know, all those things you're supposed to do and I'm still standing and you know, considering you know. But I had a lot of saunas and I drank a lot of miso and I did a lot of meditation. And, you know, took a lot of different kinds of remedies and had acupuncture and, you know, did my, did my part to keep my health going, so far. My mother lived to ninety-three. Somehow, I'm not sure I'll live that long. I'd like to, but I'm not sure.

Oh wow. Yeah.

So yeah, there was a lot. It was very rich and lots of impacts.

Yeah so for you, the challenges on your health developed, you developed those into looking at survival tactics and ways of mitigating the impacts in a way that not everyone did. I mean, I feel there was quite a lot of that. It was quite a lot of experimental stuff around flower remedies, essential oils at laying on of hands. I mean, even that went on a Blue Gate, I have to say (Laughs) in between! Yeah, so that was a part, in a way that was part of the personal development that, you know, potentially was there. And, yeah, I think having a certain amount of education, literacy, and, you know, we didn't have the internet in those days. So it was harder to access these things.

Right. Right. I mean, when you think about how we spread the word without social media, we did a brilliant job!

Yeah. Yeah, we did. We did. And, because it wasn't so easy, I don't think it was so easily monitored. I'm sure they were monitoring the phone box on the Nightingales housing estate down from Blue Gate, but the. the, the sort of small scale telephone tree, you know

(Inaudible).

Yeah! (Laughs). Yeah. Yeah.

That was great. It was, it was amazing. And but, you know, it came out of the peace, all those little peace group movements were off to consciousness raising. So there was experience of women being together in small to medium sized groups to do stuff, to talk and to do stuff. That, I don't find any of that now.

No, yeah. I think as a result of those localised Greenham Women Everywhere support, tours, and everything, actually, in a way, it's an invisible legacy. But it is a legacy, that of a whole, very broad generation of women, that if, if camp touched their lives, they might go off and spend the rest of their life working with immigrant

women or, you know, asylum seekers. I know, I know, quite a lot of women that were I was at camp with, are still like, it became their, their life's work.

Well I would also hope that some women got more into the whole ecological part of it, and caring for the earth, from the experience of being on the common and actually what it meant to try to care for the earth. You know, like, how you went to the toilet and what you did with any rubbish. And, you know, just all those how you treated the trees, all that kind of thing. I think, you know, I like to think that as well, that some women did much more of that than they might have done before. Yeah, yeah. I mean, certainly, it was a massive consciousness raising exercise. That's for sure. You know. Yeah, absolutely wonderful. For example, in the beginning, we'd have these money meetings where we decide everything, whoever was running, the meetings would say, 'Well, we won't write anything down, we'll take it away after the meeting and write it down.' And I was so opposed to that. Coming from my political background, I knew what could happen between the meeting and writing it down. So one week, I finally said, 'I'll chair the money meeting today!' And I got the book. And as we made the decisions, I wrote it in the book! And after that, it was always written in the book at the meeting. Because you know, there's much exploitation, and there was a naivete, that would allow the exploitation. And then there were the people with experience of exploiting who nobody was stopping. And it's like I'm not having this! I was unpopular in certain ways.

Well, shall we cheerio for now and put the kettle on? Because yeah, and we can keep in touch Jean ...