

EASTER 1983

We went to Burghfield this time as we were a mixed party of eight, Mike, Hilary, Robert, Peter, Sue, Konrad, Richard and myself. We made careful preparations and all attended the NVDA day to get to know each other better, and to become a group rather than individuals. This was important and I think we had a rougher time there with Paul and his 'police' tactics than we did on the actual blockading. Then the group had another meeting to work out finances, logistics, tents, food, drink etc. We all put money in the kitty for food and Hilary and Richard did the buying. Sue made a quiche for the first evening and Hilary a rice loaf for the second. I think our only slight mistake was too much bread and not enough orange juice, but the catering was really fantastic. Other CND members from Deal gave us cakes and extra eggs. Paul made out cards with his phone number and address for contact in case we were arrested, as by now we had decided who was prepared for arrest and who was to observe. This planning was all necessary and it worked without a hitch.

Sue picked me up soon after 3 on Wednesday afternoon and we collected Robert. Peter had decided to go on his motor bike, but even so the car was pretty full. We arrived at the Burghfield camp site soon after 6.30, met Peter, and I put my small tent up near the Canterbury group, leaving enough room for our six man tent, as the site was rapidly filling. and getting muddier. There were two large marquee tents for the organisers, roped off paths, a sort of DIY loo and pit area, people directing traffic, and in fact the whole place was starting to buzz. By 8.45 we were getting worried that the Peace Van had not arrived as it was leaving Deal about the same time as we did. Just as Sue and Peter were going to phone Paul to check, it arrived, and we were able to park it quite close to the tents where it was to be used as a communication centre. (In the event it was hardly used officially so we were lucky enough to use it ourselves). We put up the big tent, went and saw the organisers about the rota for the next day, had a huge supper and wine, and then went for our official workshop and briefing. By the time we crawled back to our tents it was nearly 2am, and we had to be up by 4.45 to go to the Daffodil Gate by 6am. The lucky ones had a little sleep! We had been a bit worried about getting up in time, but men with megaphones boomed at us at a quarter to five so we had no excuse for staying in our comparatively warm sleeping bags any longer. My son, Mark, had joined me from Salford the previous evening, and was on a later



shift, so I piled my sleeping bags on to him and met the Deal people outside the tent in the cold, damp darkness.

There were hundreds of people milling around, so our two observers collected some food, we made sure the phone number we had written on our arms the night before had not rubbed off, and set off with a big bunch to the Daffodil Gate. There are three gates at Purghfield, called by OND, Daffodil, Tulip and Bluebell, and we went off at a spanking pace. After about half an hour we arrived at a gate, but the wrong one! It was Tulip, so we carried on round the factory fence and road and eventually after walking for over an hour in total, got to the right gate and joined the other demonstrators, press and police. There must have been about 30 demonstrators, nearly as many TV crews and press, including some from the States and Canada, and quite a lot of police lined up, with reinforcements sitting in vans just along the road.

Blockading is never as simple as it sounds. Vehicles can be stopped unless one is physically moved, but pedestrians and local residents are not so easy. There was a walkie talkie to keep in touch with the other gates, and our main task was to stop workers either entering or leaving by this main gate. One or two cars tried to rush us, but were turned back, then we had half a dozen or so workers walking and pushing their way through us. We felt that sitting or lying down was less provocative than standing, so we squashed together in three rows. Hilary got banged on the head by a bicycle being carried in, and a policeman trod on my stomach, not very hard I'm glad to say! We tried to talk to the workers but they felt we were a load of unemployed layabouts so were not impressed. To be quite honest the workers were delayed as much by the press as they were by us, but at least no vehicles got in at all, and when we heard that helicopters had been used to transport vital people in, we felt we had had some success. We were also aware that if the police had really wanted to move us, there were more than enough of them to do so, which of course is exactly what happened at one gate at Greenham. In our four hour stint we let in and out a few residents, but we were not entirely happy about this, as the houses are owned by the MoD and most people there work in the factory.

After about three hours of sitting on old fertiliser bags we began to get a bit chilly, but our observers kept supplying us with hot coffee, sandwiches, chocolate, etc, and we sang a few songs (rather badly) and sometimes sat back to back for a bit of support and a small area of warmth. Our main problem were the SWP crowd



who paraded about with banners and newspapers purely for their own sakes. They had had no NVDA training, wanted to stand when the rest of us wanted to sit and were a damn menace. One CND member bought all their newspapers so we could sit on them, but the SWP girl rushed off to her van and came back with masses more. Then one of the NVDA instructors said that he would give them a briefing down the road, and when they returned some time later, they were so furious as they said it had been undemocratic and stupid, that much to our relief and cheers, they all pushed off.

By this time the sun was shining at intervals and no more people were attempting to go in or out. When the relief batch of CND members turned up for duty, we got to our feet and walked briskly back to camp, where we had breakfast. We were not on gate duty until 6pm, but on standby at 2pm. Luckily we were not needed then, so some of our group went to Reading, Konrad played his guitar and the rest of us relaxed. There were masses of reporters at the site as Joan Ruddock, Bruce Kent, etc, were giving interviews. Konrad and I both gave recordings for the local radio, Konrad with his guitar and me with just talking. Unfortunately we did not hear the end product as we had no radio.

We had another meal and lots of wine at about 4.30 before going off to the Bluebell Gate. At about 5 the heavens opened and it bucketed down for about an hour. The camp site turned into a sea of mud, vehicles and people got stuck and the whole place was bedlam. We waited until the rain eased as everyone felt it was not a good idea to sit for four hours soaking wet on the road, although we felt bad about those getting wet at the end of a long stint. Bluebell Gate was not far away and we relieved a lot of drenched people. The police on duty here were very chatty as they stood in a line looking down on us. I felt there was quite a lot of needle in their remarks, but Konrad and Richard who bore the brunt of it, didn't rise at all. After about an hour different police came on and they were much more reserved. We were lucky not to get wet again, and although we sang a bit, the time passed slowly. It was a very small gate and when some demonstrators came early to relieve the sitters, we decided to go and put candles out along the road as by then it was very still and pitch black. On the walk back we met Mark who joined us, collected the candles and lit and stuck them in the banks. We had mulled wine and cake and went to our tents.

We all slept much better although ~~xxx~~ there were one or two heavy squally showers. As there were many more campers by that



time, we decided that ~~xxx~~ we would <sup>do</sup> two hours blockading at Tulip Gate at the civilized time of 8am. This was much the most relaxed period; there was a wood fire for warmth, only a few police, no road for residents, and a crowd who could actually sing properly! There was a radio, so we heard what was happening in the world, and when we did the hokey-kokey and knees, one of the policemen very nearly joined us. Our two hours went rapidly and when we returned to the camp we rushed to take our tents down and get in the van and car to join the Chain, as we were informed that the road were filling up so fast, that if we didn't go soon we would have to stay at Burghfield.

We made a convoy of van, car and motor bike, and set off for the main road between Burghfield and Aldermaston. As we approached it we met the traffic. Coaches, cars, pedestrians all jammed together. We had been feeling a bit isolated in our small group at the camp site, but when we joined this avalanche of people we were overwhelmed with a feeling of relief and exhilaration. It had been the same at Greenham in December. There is always a fearful period when you think you are the only people who have bothered to turn up. Well, we had this fantastic and very slow seven mile drive to Aldermaston, with people both lining and filling the road.. They all looked and pointed to the Peace Van, and cheered when we shouted that the road was solid with people behind us. Once we pulled up and asked a girl where she thought we should park. She didn't know, then rather shamefacedly said that she had been the person who had got the Peace Van stuck in a multi storey car park in Darlington recently! We went on until we were just past the Aldermaston main gate where we hoped that we might meet up with the Deal coaches. There were not quite so many people there; so we pulled off on to a side road and joined the crowd. By this time it was just after one, but the organisers on bikes with megaphones said that there would be a delay in making the chain as masses more demonstrators were still arriving. We lined ourselves up in a large puddle which helped to wash some of the Burghfield mud from our boots, and waited. We felt, as campers, we were easily distinguishable from the coach parties, by our weather-beaten appearance, mud, and scruffy slept-in clothing. After a while the megaphones boomed, bells rang, whistles whistled, and the balloons were let off. These balloons were not all that great on our bit of road, as they either sank like stones, or else shot into the bare branches of the trees opposite and just hung there. Local children had a marvellous time trying to rescue them later.



It was really a bit of a let down after this, no one knew quite what to do next. I suggested that as a gesture of defiance all the men should pee through the Aldermaston fence, but no one took the idea up. We walked back to the main gate, again searching for Deal people, and after hanging around for a while, decided that we would drive to the Festival site. At this point Sue and Peter left us.

Luckily Mark knew his way around the area, so we soon got off the crowded road. We did see Terry's empty coaches parked, but didn't stop. We went round various lanes and then saw the Festival site from the back, across a large soggy meadow, so we parked and set off for it. Our only problem was a wide, water filled ditch, but we negotiated quite well apart from Konrad with a hole in his boot. Again we searched for Deal's two banners unsuccessfully, so wandered round, let of special balloons for Liz and Eileen, met friends from other areas, watched and listened to the Fall Out Marching Band, street theatre groups, jugglers, children playing on the inflatables, singers, groups, speeches, etc., etc. We stayed for a couple of hours, went back to the van, had soup and set off for home. We dropped Mike in London, and I drove the rest of the way arriving in Deal at about 10pm.

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Burghfield, Aldermaston, Greenham Common. For me, these names conjure up pictures of chain link fencing, barbed wire, strange igloo mounds, pipes and aerals, stark buildings and huts, neatly trimmed grass, MoD police and civil police, guard dogs, notices, military vehicles, oppression. We stood, sat, danced and sang to relieve our anxieties and fears that these places and all nuclear weapons produce. We went to show our solidarity, and for a few hours being with the thousands who feel as we do, were exhilarated, and gained strength from our mutal concern. We felt despair with the only farmer in a 15 mile radius who would rent us a field for camping, but who charged CND £1,200 rental and a £2,000 deposit which would be forfeited if there was more than one camp fire and too much wear and tear on the ground in his opinion, which there must have been after that rain. Sitting on roads, forming human chains is all very well, but somehow I don't feel we are gaining many more supporters this way. Is it all just self indulgence? The organisers worked hard, too hard somehow, spontaneity was lacking. Megaphones, instructions, rosta sheets etc, etc. OK, you can't expect all those people to be in the right place at the right time



by intuition only, and of course we were told that it was up to us where and when we ~~fix~~ blockaded, but all the same I felt we were being too organised. The SWP were a pain as they went purely for their own gain and profit. They certainly don't do the CND image any good.

Are we doing ourselves and our cause any good? I don't think we can go on making human chains round the countryside, or blockading unless on a massive scale of hundreds or thousands per gate. I feel that the December demo at Greenham was more successful, perhaps because it was the first, perhaps because it was all women. But I'm glad I went to Burghfield. The shared discomfort, cold, wet, etc, were necessary, and actually in our group we looked after ourselves so well and were so prepared, that in some sort of way it was almost, but not quite, a disappointment not to be arrested.

But where do we go from here?

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29th Oct 83

Down in darkest Deal we don't always hear what is happening in the rest of Britain; the grapevine network is slow to reach us. As far as I was concerned, the demo on 22nd October was OK and a lot of people turned up in support, but by the time I had read the Sunday Observer and the Monday Guardian, I was in despair. I phoned Hilary on Monday early, and told her to read her paper before I came to see her in the afternoon. By this time she was pretty gloomy too. In effect we both felt that although somewhere between 200,000 and 400,000 people had turned up at Hyde Park, the powers that be and the media, had more or less ignored us. OK, where the hell did we go from there?

We decided to try a contact in Canterbury. How did they feel? It appeared there was a meeting that evening to discuss the cutting of the perimeter fence at Greenham Common on Saturday. Mind you it was not put in those blunt terms, but we were invited to come along and find out what was happening. This direct action had been thought up nearly a month earlier, but somehow no one had told us. The point was that only 'reliable' women were contacted, as everyone hoped that the police and security would not be increased on that day, although everyone was aware that the cruise build up would be starting at the base by 1st November. Telephone chats about what was going to happen were strictly forbidden, so there was a lot of foot slogging to arrange everything. At our meeting in Canterbury there were about 11 active women who were prepared to go, and they had already had their instructions and NVDA briefing. What we had to do was to drive to Greenham on the 29th Oct, and then we would be told how to proceed. As a cover we said we were going to a Halloween party! We took pumpkins as well as bolt cutters, but I don't think many people were deceived. Incidentally the code name for the cutters was 'black cardies', but I've no idea why. Hilary and I decided to join the Canterbury crowd and if possible get some women from Deal and Dover. I wanted to have a driver, as I didn't feel capable of driving and cutting.

Our first problem was bolt cutters. We had been given a sample of perimeter fence, so we searched our own tool boxes. I found a fairly chunky pair of cutters, which we decided to test. Unfortunately we mislaid our 'sample' so in broad daylight wandered around trying to find a test fence. There are one or two odd cuts in a fence in Deal, which shall be nameless, but when we eventually found our sample, we realised that these cutters were useless. Well, from the sublime to the ridiculous we went. Through friends and many phone calls we obtained on loan the largest bolt croppers you have ever seen. They were a good four feet long, you had to have a licence to own them, and you also needed a gorilla to lift them above shoulder height. (I also reckon they cost a bomb). But they cut the sample like butter red hot. They were fantastic.

Problem number two was a driver. There were genuine reasons why Deal women whom we approached could not come, so in the end Pam and Janet from Dover joined us as driver and observers.

We all met at Canterbury, drove through London and met again at the Heston Service station on the M4, to go in convoy to Greenham. Owing to roadworks and (as far as we could see) non existing roadworks, we eventually reached Greenham at about 3pm, having seen quite a lot of women in cars and vans, all looking rather un-Halloweenish apart from a token pumpkin.



As always at Greenham, it is so laid back and low key, its never worth asking anyone what they want you to do, if you can even find anyone to ask. The only information I obtained was, that the cutting was to start at 4pm, and you just chose your own piece of fence and got stuck in. On our drive from from the blue gate to the main, we were very daunted, I might be more honest and describe it as shit scared, by the number of police and British soldiers inside the fence. In fact we were most terrified by the dogs they had, and also that most of the men had walkie talkies, so reinforcements could be called instantly to areas of action.

We parked our cars on the other side of the road opposite the main gate, met Vicky who lives at the camp now, but knows the Canterbury crowd. We decided that we would cut a couple of hundred yards from the main gate to the right, round the corner, so we went back to the car to get our cutters. The others just stuffed theirs under their jumpers and anoraks, but Hilary and I had a problem. In the end I put our cutters down the leg of my jeans, and then put waterproof trousers over the top. I could only walk very slowly, with an extraordinarily bad limp, and also they were damn heavy. They were so jammed down my jeans that when we got to the fence, in full view of the security people I had to strip to get them out!

Hilary and I cut like mad. We took it in turns, and I think it was only adrenaline which kept us holding those cutters above our heads. We cut on the diagonal all the time, as this makes the fence much harder to mend. I think we chopped about eight sections. An observer told me that they were photographing us from inside the fence while we were in action, and we were very aware that just a few yards from us there were half a dozen security police and an alsation. On each side of us cutting was going on, and about 50 yards away on the right, a whole section was pulled down and the police came out to grab the women. It was really quite hard to see what was going on as we were working so hard, cutting and pulling back cut pieces, taking it in turns all the time. The sweat was rolling off me and I hurled my jacket and sweater to Pam, and almost got down to my thermal vest! We didn't really cut for all that long, 15 minutes or so, I've really no idea, it felt like hours, but we saw the security guards coming from where the fence was right down, so Hilary ran off with the cutters, as we knew they were the first things to be taken. As she rounded the corner she saw more police outside another wrecked section, taking bolt cutters from the women, and also arresting some. Hilary had the presence of mind to hide ours in the bracken under a silver birch, and when things were a little quieter, we found them again, tucked them under Hilary's jacket, wrapped my sweater round the bottom of them, and sneaked back through the bushes, over the road, and hid them in the car. We really felt we couldn't afford to have them taken by the police, and neither did we feel it was worth provoking arrest.

By this time I was shaking rather a lot, but I think its better doing something, so I held on to a section of fence which police and workmen were trying to repair from the inside, and we were trying to hold down from the outside. One of the coppers came out and grabbed me hard and heaved me down. I felt my fingers give ~~me~~ out, so let go and landed with a bump. They got that section back up, but it was not very secure, and I think we all knew it wouldn't take much to get it down again. One woman who obviously felt that arrest was the right thing to do, was inside the fence, lying down, with security guards taking no notice of her, at times walking right over her. By this time it was getting dark, so we went and had some nourishment and decided what to do next.



When we met up with the Canterbury women we found that two of them had been arrested. One was acting as observer to a Cheltenham group who had no observer with them, so Anne got nicked with them. Hilary from Canterbury was actually caught in the act, so I suppose that was a fair cop, but we all felt that the arrests were done in a very random fashion indeed. You were just lucky if you were left alone. Sometimes the police came outside the fence, round the back, and arrested you, sometimes grabbed when there was a big enough hole to climb through and grab you from the front. We heard various stories about the different treatment received as well. Some police and soldiers were quite OK, fairly gentle and friendly. Others were very rough indeed, put the boot in, and I've heard since of at least one broken arm and bent-back wrist, etc.

Back at the main gate we had quite a laugh. Before the cutting started, one woman poured Super Glue into the main padlock, and it worked a treat. The guards had to use a pair of bolt cutters, (with us outside giving advice on how to use them) to cut the padlock itself away, and replace it with a very small and inadequate one!

We decided we must cut again. Unfortunately a lot of cutters had been seized, but others had been hurled into the bushes. We found one pair, and by now in pitch dark, started again. Almost instantly torches were shone in our faces and the dogs started barking again. A voice from inside the fence, coming from the direction of a torch being pointed at me, said, 'I recognise that one,' so I cut a moment longer and passed the cutters back to a waiting woman, and went back to the main gate to get more to come and help us. Quite a lot joined me and I led them back to our area. Slight panic when I got there as I found the Canterbury crowd, but not Hilary. Eventually she turned up and told us what had happened. She had waited quietly until it all went silent, then started cutting on her own like mad. A dark shape appeared beside her, and grabbed her arm, so she hurled the cutters away. The policeman asked her where they were, and when she said she didn't know, much to her surprise he let go of her arm, so she walked off, straight into a large area of brambles! She was <sup>really</sup> very lucky. A bit later we went back to the spot with my torch, and she found her hat, but no sign of the cutters. The copper probably found them himself in the end.

We all went back to our cars. The Canterbury women said that they would stay as long as necessary to find their two arrested friends, but they thought we could do no more good by staying so Pam, Janet, Hilary and I came home.

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Neither Hilary or I wanted to leave. This sort of thing is a big problem. We felt we should stay on, but there were quite a lot of buts. First our cutters were so big, heavy and unwieldy, that we knew they would be seized if we used them again, and they must have been very expensive, so we wanted to return them. We thought all along that this was a one day operation, and had told Pam and Janet so, which meant they had commitments at home. We couldn't help the Canterbury women, apart from being supportive, as our car was full. Also there were many women going home at this time, and we thought the whole affair had come to a finish. But I still feel we should have stayed on, and so does Hilary. OK next time we will.



The actual cutting I don't think was done correctly. We should have cut large triangles or diamonds in the fence. Large enough for someone to crawl through, and almost impossible to mend easily. Our cutters were super efficient, but much too big. You want more cut and run tactics, with one person taking the cutters off when threatened, and hiding them where they can be found again. The observers should really be far enough back to be out of the danger zone, but of course in the dark this is not possible. Having said this, I'm not sure that cutters can ever be used again like this. New tactics all the time are necessary, but don't worry the Greenham women and thinking and working on it all the time.

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31st Oct. 83.

Another demo. This time in Trafalgar Square and Whitehall. The MPs were voting just down the road whether to have cruise in this country. Of course it was a foregone conclusion, but thousands of us felt we must go to show our unhappiness, frustration, but not despair. We will go on protesting until the end.

Trafalgar Square was packed with people holding torches. A sight once more to give us hope that we are not alone. No one there knew what was planned as it is against the law to demonstrate near the Houses of Parliament when it is in session. I wandered off and found some women who had been at Greenham on Saturday, and they thought that we would all go in procession down Whitehall anyway. Quite by chance our group found itself quite near the front of the procession, in with a large Christian group, punks and SWP. Just a few yards down Whitehall there was a triple line of police, with vans and reinforcements backing them up. We sat down in the road, and hundreds followed us, so the whole road back to the square was solid with sitting people. The Christians sang continuously, mainly protest songs, some religious, and after a couple of hours, not only was I hoarse, but almost converted! The singing was mainly to show our peaceful protest, and to drown out the more ~~unruly~~ unruly element of SWP shouting inappropriate slogans. After a while this group went off, I think to join some anarchists who were popping up behind the police cordon.

Bruce Kent, Joan Ruddick and other CND leaders were sitting near us and I think we all found the road hard after about 2½ hours. Apart from those sitting, the pavements were also packed, and I spotted Jill and Alan, whom Mark had met only a few days before at Hyde Park. We talked (or more truthfully shouted in each other's ears), exchanged news and agreed that we would probably meet again soon at another demo.

Soon after that I saw appearing, hand in hand, women from Greenham. They came right round between the sitting protesters and the police. I recognised Lee, an American whom I talked to earlier, and went and joined her in their line, standing with arms linked, and our backs to the police. I really felt these were the people I had to be with. There is this curious kindred spirit, complete understanding and togetherness, mixed with the knowledge that over the weekend we had all broken the law and cut the fence. I don't know, its hard to define, unless you experience it, perhaps it is a sort of mental rapport. Anyway a great cheer went up from the seated



demonstrators. They passed candles to us and we stood, swayed and sang more songs, mainly Greenham ones, including 'There's a hole in your fence, dear major.....' At this the whole crowd erupted, and even the police behind us laughed. Mind you I'm glad they didn't search us, as I'm certain most of us had a token piece of Greenham perimeter fence in a pocket or bag!

Soon after 10 Joan Ruddick asked everyone to go home quietly, and the seated ones got up and wandered back to Trafalgar Square, but the Greenham women formed themselves into a huge circle, still holding hands, having put the lighted candles on the road. We danced round in circles and snakes, and in the end, sat down again in a ring, just us, and drew CND and feminist symbols on the road in chalk, and tried to organise a drifting off in twos and threes to meet again outside the Houses of Parliament. Actually the authorities had anticipated this and every street leading in that direction was blocked by police, so I think we either drifted home (very reluctantly in most cases) or went straight back to Greenham whether prepared with sleeping bags etc, or not. I must say I was very tempted/indeed to go with them. Each time I see them, the pull is stronger.



4th - 6th November.

This is not an easy weekend to describe to the folks back home. There was nothing dramatic happening at all. To be honest I would have to say we had a firework party, drank a lot of booze, went for some country walks, helped make two benders, ate a lot of good food, drank a lot of rather scummy coffee, were interviewed by Finnish, Swiss, Yugoslavian and French journalists, had our photos taken many times (including at 8.30am), got buzzed and surveyed by helicopters about every three quarters of an hour, chatted and argued with police and soldiers, were a tourist attraction to hundreds of people who came to see us on Sunday, sang, danced, got a lot of smoke in our eyes from the camp fires, crapped in the Shit Pit, found my car quite comfortable to sleep in, and good to drive, had a major panic when a policeman went berserk and starting pulling tents and benders down, but the real point of going to Greenham was communicating with the women. I think Hilary and I now feel that we are ~~xxxxxx~~ part-time residents of the Orange Gate.

We arrived at about 10pm on Friday night, found we had forgotten cooking utensils etc, but of course it didn't matter. We went straight to the camp fire introduced ourselves, and sat and talked for about 3 hours. On our drive round the fence we had seen hundreds more police and soldiers than last week, this time many outside as well as in. We realised that action was going to be really difficult. The women said nothing had been planned for this weekend, it was a time to hear ideas, make ~~contact~~ <sup>friends</sup> with each other, relax, and try to make some sort of friendly ~~contact~~ <sup>contact</sup> with the security people.

The next morning we shared a huge breakfast of scrambled eggs with herbs, cheese etc etc and toast, then Hilary and I walked all along the fence to the main gate. It was really quite a sight. Almost every panel had been damaged in some way. We could see that many panels had been pulled right down, others just hacked about. They had been mended in a fashion, but they wouldn't take much unravelling to make women-sized holes to climb through. Inside now there are two rolls of barbed wire, but we thought these carefully snipped would pull back easily. The other little problem of course is the internal security. Every few yards, always in sight of each other are soldiers, and even in the remote spots, huge lamps and generators are set up. There is not a lot of privacy around the fence. This does not mean that the Greenham women have given up. Just a change of tactics.

At the main gate we handed over some money and talked for a while, but decided we far preferred the much more normal and less weird looking women at our gate. We went back again, through the mud, over the duck boards, squeezing past policemen, most of whom really do look terribly young, had some lunch, and sat around. The clothes etc that we handed over were very much appreciated, the money also, and the 'black cardie' raised a great laugh when I said that it had been donated by the Betteshanger miners, and they had thought of having the handle inscribed, but reluctantly decided it would not be a good idea! Actually on Sunday Hilary and I had a discussion and ~~very xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ agreed that it was no good keeping the cutters here in Deal, so we handed them over to Miranda for safe keeping, and she promised that she would make contact when they were going to be used, so we could help. [We decided to have a firework display that night, met the four from Canterbury, and also two women from the Glastonbury Green Festival. There was rather too much sitting around with reporters etc, so when Miranda said she wanted to make a bender, we went and helped. The ground was very stony and hard, and the only way I found to make holes was with a screwdriver and mallet. It worked. It took about an hour and a half to make the bender, a really superior structure and we all felt very pleased with ourselves.



We then had supper, vodka and orange and lots of wine. A Swiss reporter had just been to Lamberhurst to do an article on English wine before coming to Greenham, so his presentation pack of three bottles were drunk almost before you had time to turn round. We then had the firework display. Well, not really a display, but we made the most of it with lots of 'Ahhhhhhhhhs' etc, then we went up to the gate and sang and danced and argued with the security men, while ~~xxxx~~ about six women ran down the fence, just to see if that sort of diversion would make it possible for a break in. They thought it would. We were pretty exhausted, went to bed and slept soundly. Mind you we ~~were~~ were further away from the fence, but the benders are right alongside it, and they have to contend with the bright arc lights, loud remarks, changing shifts, etc all night long from inside, with police driving vehicles and walking around, outside.

The next morning Liz brought us coffee in bed. How about that for luxury living! We decided not to bother with breakfast but have brunch instead. Hilary and I went for a walk on the common. It is really lovely, very wild ~~but~~ sometimes nature is red in tooth and claw. We saw a rabbit being chased and caught by a stoat, only a few feet from us, and the screams of the rabbit were terrible. We tried to chase the stoat away, but its impossible to know what happened in the end. The bad part of the common was suddenly coming on a great battery of lights to guide planes to the end of the runway. This really was an intrusion of privacy on English common land.

Another huge meal based on Bill's eggs, onion, tuna, and toast, which by this time I had learned how not to burn, and then once more reporters, and hundreds of people turned up including a coach load from Wales. Some brought fuel, some food, some just words of encouragement, and some just walked around photographing us. Most were made to feel very welcome and their support was encouraging, but unfortunately there was an incident with some men who wanted to make a camp at the Orange Gate and join in any action that was going. All the women from the camp said that Greenham is women only and must remain that way and I agreed with them. [The Canterbury women were packing up their tent and getting ready to go and ~~xxx~~ Hilary and I felt that we would probably leave shortly, but life at Greenham is never predictable. Things always happen. 20HL One nice thing that happened was that an Australian woman brought around a marvellous PINE GAP ring, decorated with mementoes from Greenham, which she was taking out to Australia to a camp which was being set up near the uranium mines in the centre of the country. For about 2 years I have had a very worn down shell in my pocket which I picked up at Sandwich Bay, so this was hung on ~~xxx~~ with gold thread, weaved in with the other wool and objects in a web shape, and the ring was held in a circle with some Greenham perimeter fence. I really like the thought of that all going to Australia. The next nice thing was that Diana asked Hilary and me to help her make another bender. Of course we accepted the invitation gladly and went off with her and Miranda to get wood. Hilary and I took some back, and started to make the 8 holes when two coppers picked up our branches and chucked them into the gorse. Oh God, we felt fools watching them do it, but when the others came back with more we retrieved most of it and set to work again.

Just as we finished, and stood back admiring our work another policeman came along and starting very roughly pulling down the tent next to the bender, and said he was going to take down all the dwellings next to the fence. Panic stations! Some of us rushed to our cars and raced to the main gate to collect women in support to argue with the police. They came running, but luckily by the time we got back everything was normal. It appears that the policeman did this entirely on his own without any orders, and



his inspector was very annoyed with him and told him that by law he was actually correct in what he did, but the police let a certain amount of latitude prevail as long as certain rules were obeyed by the women, one being that there must be a space between the benders and the fence.

By this time it was getting really quite late, so Hilary and I put the rest of our stuff in the car, collected up two women who wanted a lift to London, and drove home.

So that was our weekend at Greenham Common. No fence cutting, only one woman inside and that was near the main gate, where they wanted to see if it could be done, nothing really dramatic, but by being there entirely satisfactory and fulfilling. We have been told that any time we come again to the Orange Gate there will ~~always~~ be room for us in a bender and we will always be made welcome. It is, of course, an extraordinary life style, but once you have stayed there and become part of it, I can understand how this becomes the real world, not how ~~the~~ everyone else lives. I shall go back on the 24th November to support Canterbury Hilary in her court case, if not before. We really do feel we shall overcome by our strength and togetherness.

150  
11  
1650

1600



23rd - 26th Nov. 1983

I wasn't going to go to Greenham until very early on the Thursday morning, but the weather was so cold, and there was a chance of freezing fog, so I left on Wednesday afternoon, having done shopping, cooked a vegetable risotto, found clothes, two sleeping bags, hot water bottle, etc etc. It was a long and not very pleasant drive on my own, but about three hours later when I arrived it was all worth it. The Greenham aura/magic/feeling was all there. Anyway its always nice to go back somewhere where you are known and wanted. I was greeted by Miranda, Ruth, Carola, Juliette, Rebekha, Charlie, Sian, Sally, Jane, Margaret, two Dutch women, a German called Elsa, A Dubliner, etc etc. I produced the Orange Gate bowl I had made and they were all thrilled and passed it from hand to hand. Then I brought out Ruth's cake from Mongeham, and a bottle of wine, and we were away. Another cake was found and we had that, then more drink appeared, and I brought out the risotto. We just heated that up, and passed the saucepan round, and each dug in with our own spoons. Its a very formal life style there! Then Miranda insisted that she made up my bed in a free bender for me as she was afraid I would be cold (it was a thick and very foggy frost) It <sup>was</sup> Diane's bender which Hilary and I had helped to make 3 weeks ago, and I must say it is a splendid construction. Eventually we drifted off to bed, and after about half an hour, two other women arrived and slept in the same bender with me. At one point in the night, one of them screamed in agony with cramp in her leg, but ~~apart from~~ <sup>on the whole</sup> that it was quite peaceful, apart from the police tramping back and forth, vehicles passing, and the fact I was so hot I had to throw off clothes and blankets all night. I won't say I slept soundly, but I was fine and comfortable.

The next morning I crawled out of the bender, leaving the other two sleeping soundly. Actually I never met them at all, as ~~by~~ the time I got back from the court they had left the orange gate. At the camp fire there were a few people around and I had orange juice and coffee, and at that moment Hilary and Liz from Canterbury arrived, so we all went in convoy to the Newbury Magistrates Court. I took Jane who had to appear, plus Sian and one Dutch woman, the other one going with Liz and Hilary. At the court, the busiest place was the 'Ladies'. It was entirely taken over by Greenham women who took advantage of the hot water in the basins to strip down, have a proper wash, and some even had the forethought to bring shampoo for their hair. It was really quite a sight. I had washed and cleaned my teeth



earlier at the camp in ice crystals rather than water, so I realised these were the experienced Greenham women. Then we all stood and sat around outside ~~the~~ court<sup>no 2</sup> on the landing for hours. There were babies and women everywhere. The police and officials had to step over and round us to carry on their normal work, while we sat on the floor and drank WVS coffee at 10p per cup. The women who had to go before the magistrates were understandably rather apprehensive as they were charged with criminal intent and criminal damage, but in the end they all were referred to the Crown Court on the 30th January. There were about 35 being charged and eventually they ~~and~~ their supporters all went back to the various gates at Greenham. Hilary, Liz and I sat talking and rather wondering what to do next, when suddenly two or three cars drew up near the camp fire and a hoard of American and English women got out, and starting taking food ~~out of~~<sup>from</sup> their cars. It was Thanksgiving Day and they had brought a banquet for the Greenham woman! You have never seen such food in your life. Quiches, four or five different salads, corn bread, muffins, olives, pumpkin and apple pies, the lot. Plus masses of red and white wine. We couldn't believe our eyes. They had brought plates, glasses, knives and forks, everything. Well, for most of the rest of the day, we sat and ate and drank<sup>talked</sup>. Other people turned up as well, including a woman with an accordin who played and sang to us. Eventually Liz and Hilary felt they had to go back home, so I saw them off and then came back to the party.

I must try to explain. This is all part of the Greenham 'thing'. A great deal of strength and support is gained on both sides by the arrival of perhaps one woman, or a coachload. While we had been at the court, a woman from London had turned up, and had done all the washing up (which was a hell of a lot I must admit) then gone again. Another woman in a Rolls Royce drove up with some food, sat and talked to us and had a coffee, then departed. Another woman in a fair sized car, parked it, opened the boot, which was full of firewood, which she proceeded to dump on our wood pile, had a coffee and a talk and drove off. It happens all the time. ~~She~~<sup>I</sup> had only been to Greenham for ~~the~~ weekends before and thought this communication only happened then, but it doesn't, it happens all the time. On Friday, a National coach, driven by a woman, came from Wales for the day. They all had parcels of food or goods, asked us if they could photograph us for a primary school project which one of the teachers was doing, and tins of fruit or jars of coffee had ~~children's~~<sup>children's</sup> labels



on, saying 'with love to Greenham women from Caroline, or Joan, or Anne, aged 7'. Two men arrived and were very diffident about approaching us, but were delighted when we asked them to have a coffee and sit with us for a while. Oh yes, another family came with chairs to put round the camp fire. The feeling of helpfulness and kindred spirits and ~~xxx~~ air of peacefulness and community of experience is something I have never come across in this way before. I think many of the ordinary police feel this. One drove up in his car when we~~xxx~~ were making a kitchen bender, and said it was a fantastic construction and could he please take a photo of it. Another policeman asked me whether we had had a bad night with the gale and he hoped we were all alright. He said that he was glad that the squaddies had gone as he thought that they were not the right people to guard the base <sup>against women.</sup> He said he knew that we would go inside again, and was obviously extremely sympathetic. He couldn't say too much, but I think communication with the sort of copper who is prepared to listen and not just think we are all lunatic women is very important. Letters arrived on Friday, some addressed specifically to the orange gate. Twenty pounds was in one envelope, words of support in others, and prayers for peace from all over the place. The people who come in person all want to feel that they are part of Greenham Common, and they are, whether they stay for an hour or a year. The women who live there all the time do get quite exhausted at the constant flow of visitors and find it hard to get any time to themselves, and even the short times I have been there I am exhilarated but also drained. I need a re-charge quite often though.

Eventually I crawled into the bender. This time Carola shared it with me. It was a ~~xxxx~~ much milder night and I hurled off even more blankets. Its lovely to lie in a bender and look up at the branches still with leaves on them. Its quite light in them as the arc lights shine all night. I was wakened sometime during that night by a great roar outside, but Carola informed me that it was just one of the unfriendly cops who resented the fact that the women were asleep, so every now and then made a loud noise to wake us up. Oh well, you can't win them all.

I got up at about 9am and had some breakfast. There were a fair number of thick heads around, and some women didn't appear until about midday. Miranda and I decided to go to Thatham to do some shopping, mainly for fresh milk and newspapers,



Its only when you stand in a crowded Coop, that you are aware of the odd aroma coming from yourself and your Greenham companion. Mostly woodsmoke I think, but I can understand how the locals notice us. We notice their overstrong smell of perfume, and somehow they really do look different from Greenham residents. Miranda wasn't a bit well, she had flu, <sup>and back at the camp</sup> ~~so~~ kept disappearing off to her bender with foul concoctions of crushed garlic and hot orange juice (I never noticed the smell funnily enough) and I dozed in the car for an hour.

When I came to, it was starting to drizzle, so Ruth, Carola and I decided it was ~~high~~ time we made a high bender to go over the camp fire and seats, as being continually soggy is no fun. We rather ignored the usual visitors, apart from asking them to hold the odd thing, and got on with it. More digging of holes in that awful ground for me with the screwdriver, but eventually we were successful and had a proper shelter to sit under. It was gréat. Someone else made some supper and I produced my last bottle, We talked about black cardies, and Christmas decorations and had a pleasant evening, but all the time the wind was picking up. By the time I went to the bender it was blowing a hurricane. For most of the night I ignored the noise quite successfully, <sup>in</sup> ~~fact~~ Miranda said she heard me snoring! and in the morning

<sup>During the night</sup> Carola and I both went in and out of the bender without waking the other. <sup>she</sup> ~~Carola~~ told me that she didn't get to bed until about three as she had been trying to hold down the kitchen tent in the gale, I had to get up at some time to have a pee, Carola got up to get a drink of water, but the bender was covered with a tent fly sheet and this was banging so much, that any other noise was positively quiet, and we certainly never noticed crawling over each others feet. At about 8.30 I got up properly and Carola did mutter something about chaos in the kitchen area as the tent had completely blown down.

The rain had stopped by this time thank goodness, and Ruth was up making coffee. Oh God, what a mess. The bender we had put up a few hours earlier, they had <sup>had</sup> ~~decided~~ to take down, all the cushions were sopping as were wooden seats, chairs, food, everything. Ruth and I decided to make a start after breakfast, hoping that more would turn up by that time to help us. It all took ~~quite~~ a long time, sorting out good from bad, <sup>Actually</sup> very little of it was really bad, even the biscuits were OK at one end of the packets, and when I tried to chuck out some really grotty bits of butter and marge, I was promptly told that if the



ashes ~~etc~~ <sup>+ mud</sup> were scraped off, they would be fine. We decided to store some of the food in the 'pantry', a construction next to the benders, of bins and things under polythene. The only trouble was that the sheeting had blown back so the bins of fruit, vegetables, more biscuits, etc, had an inch of water in the bottom of each container. Well eventually we got it all straightened out to some degree of order, and then Carola who was getting a lift back with me as far as London, asked if I was in a hurry, as if not she thought we ~~ought~~ <sup>ought</sup> to make a kitchen bender, rather than just put the tent up again. ~~Well~~ We used all the material from the camp fire bender, I dug six more holes with the screwdriver, then we made a trench all round for the surplus polythene to be tucked in with earth piled on top, made fastenings with stones tied inside a bunched piece of sheeting, with a brick hung like a parcel from the outside. We had diagonals as well as struts, and it really was a masterpiece. I hope it still is, because that night the next gale came and I'm terrified that if the ~~the~~ wind got inside it, it could never get out and the whole thing ~~would~~ <sup>would have been</sup> taken like a giant balloon. Ruth is the most practical one there, lets hope that she ~~and the others~~ will have looked after it!

One strange thing happened while we were having lunch and that was that six men in ordinary clothes and one policewoman in uniform came out of the base and over to us and asked if we would give them a cup of tea. We asked them what they did in the base, and they were very gagey indeed, and would not say, just asked us questions. We did not like them at all, so quite soon they moved off. They were obviously special branch, particularly as they kept asking about the German woman who had gone by that time. Most visitors are welcome, but not quite all, specially if they come out of the base.

Carola and I left at about 2.30, and I got home about 3 hours later. I can't wait to go back there on the 9th December.



9th - 13th Dec 83.

Hilary and I had a long, dark, wet and windy drive to Greenham on Friday evening, not getting to the Orange Gate until 11.30. There was only one woman still wandering around, so we had a drink and went to bed in the car. It was still blowing like mad and we felt it would be noisy in a bender and anyway its hard to knock on bender 'doors' and ask if there is any room inside, although I did try.

The next morning we met old friends and new ones, and all day women were arriving. There were 270 Americans from Minnesota over for 9 days to ~~support~~ <sup>meet</sup> Greenham women in the demonstration and give general support. They had been sponsored by women's groups from back home to pay for their air fares. They came, I think, because they were so ashamed of Reagan. They also support their own Peace Camps in USA. One of the permanent residents at the Orange Gate is Sally and on Saturday morning, a car drew up with Americans in it asking for her. It was her mother who had arrived before her letter to say that she was coming. We found Sally and she and her mother Barbara had a fantastic time talking, and Barbara moved into Sally's bender, and was still there when I left.

Preparations were being made all round us for the following day's demo. There were plenty of troops inside the fence, and far more police than I had seen last time I was there. On our side, marquee tents and loos were being erected. Hilary and I were quite surprised that the demo was not just going to be with mirrors, musical instruments, etc, but we were going to try to get the fence down again. There was quite a lot of discussion where this should take place, and of course we said that we would do what we could to help. I wasn't sure what the reaction of some of our Deal people would be to this, but ~~as~~ <sup>because</sup> they didn't have to join in. They were coming up in a mini bus and the Peace Van just for the day on Sunday, and there were children with them, including Esther.

In the afternoon Hilary and I drove round to the Green Gate which neither of us had seen before. It is very lovely and quiet and peaceful in the woods, with lots of tents there, but the silos are very close, which makes the reality inside the fence very real and overpowering. There was meant to be a mixed demo at that gate on the afternoon we were there, but apart from the fact there were quite a lot of men with the women wandering round the fence, <sup>not many came to the fence</sup> and there was a strong Christian element around. The Bhuddist nuns were chanting and when a couple of them recognised us, they carried on beating their instruments and just bowed to us. We bowed back, what else does one do under such circumstances?

We went back to the Orange Gate, and were given an instruction into how to use the 'baby'. This is a racket and lever thing which when hooked onto the fence on one side and round a sturdy tree on the other with a length of rope, helps to pull down the fence (hopefully) There were obviously going to be problems with it, so that night when it was dark, about 6 of us went on to the Common where the runway feed-in lights are, and tried it out on two of the posts. We certainly got them to bend, but I think we felt it was going to be a slow operation, but with the cutting with 'knitting needles' the 'tea party' could probably take place. Also we hoped that there would be so many women around that our activities would not be spotted too soon.

We had some supper and a bit of a party and sing song and ~~staggered off to bed~~ a dance with Marion playing her accordian and giving barn dance instructions, which on frozen ground and in a rather alcoholic haze were not all that easy to follow.



Eventually we went off to the car to sleep, and were glad of all the sleeping bags and blankets we had, as it was freezing hard by this time, and trips to the shit pit were decidedly chilly. I left some orange juice in the car door pocket, and in the morning this was frozen hard, as were all the windows on the car on the inside. Cleaning teeth in the morning in ice crystals which will not pour out of the container takes some doing, but personally I would much rather have cold still air rather than wind, which cuts right through you.

*1300 k the orange gate alone*  
We had breakfast, and all morning women arrived, most of them bearing gifts of some sort. Clothes, blankets, food, drink, money. There were piles in polythene bags everywhere. The place looked a hell of a mess, but we just piled it all into the washing tent and the kitchen bender and left it there for the time being. Much to our surprise the police were letting vehicles come to all the gates, so we kept an eye out for the Peace Van, and Hilary and I walked down to the road to see if ~~it~~ it had arrived. First I saw Melanie and Robert who had brought a vine to plant, then I met Jill Tweedie and Alan and Jane and a friend, and I took them back to the camp and introduced Jill to various residents, and Diana showed her the bender that I had helped to make. Then I saw Sian and Cleise wandering off round the fence, and I joined them as we decided to find a good place to use the 'baby'. We were told that some London women had brought with them 100 'knitting needles' so we dispersed some of these round the place, and then walked towards the Main Gate, and decided that the area around the swamp was the best area for fence pulling and cutting, as it would be hard to get police reinforcements there. Windy, by this time, more and more police were moving into position, but also more and more women were stationing themselves round the fence and we were obviously going to have a fantastic turnout. We knew some of these were prepared to be active, but we had no idea how many.

We went back to the Orange Gate, having fixed our spot, and there I met Elizabeth and Kirstie with the children. By this time it was 1 o'clock and suddenly the whole place erupted with noise. Shouting, banging, musical instruments being played, (I hooted the car horn, and lots of others copied me) and for about 5 minutes there was this amazing noise everywhere. The papers estimated about 30,000 women there, but as usual its impossible to tell, and all I know is that there were a hell of a lot around where I was.

By 2, those prepared for action, Sian, Zoe, Cleise, Charlie, Rebe~~kah~~ah, Annie, Margaret, Sally, Ruth, Hilary, Penny, Jean, Miranda, Diana, Nicki, Gerry, Marion, Shirley, Lesley, me, etc etc, etc. collected our knitting needles, and went off down the fence. We decided our action should take place at 3. We found a really muddy, mucky spot, and stood around and some sat down round where the 'baby' was going to be fixed to on the tree, and at 3 just as the yelling and shouting started, we made for the fence. I cut like hell, and just as a policeman was about to grab the cutters, I chucked them behind me to someone else. An Inspector was going up and down the line of women with his men trying to stop us, but we went on cutting, then got the idea of pulling the fence, just by woman power. My God, it worked. I think we all thought that those posts were sunk 10 feet into the ground. They are not! The fence shook and wobbled, and swayed. The baby was captured and hurled inside, but it didn't matter. We just heaved in unison, and while we heaved, the cops pulled us off, but we went back again and again. At one point a burly policeman sat on top of me, but I still had my fingers inside the fence, pulling all the time. Then a section with post came down, and I saw Sian, Charlie and others chuck some carpet



over the barbed and razor wire and climb in for their 'tea party' and stand on top of the hill waving their arms. Some soldiers grabbed them, but instead of making arrests, shoved them back outside to us, over the wire again. The police were getting rough, so we moved a few yards away, and went on pulling, and more fence gave. At one point I was being pulled by a policeman from outside and a soldier was thumping my knuckles from the inside, but I hardly felt it. Most times when I was hurled off, the women standing and encouraging us caught me, but once I went with a crash on my back. By this time we were all covered with mud which was almost knee high in places anyway. The police linked arms and tried to lean against the fence to stop it coming, so for a few minutes, I put my arms each side of a helmet and unravelled the wire round his head. When I was exhausted and realised I couldn't do much more, I went and found Hilary and we squelched our way back to the Orange Gate. Diana came with us, and although large sections of the fence had not been touched, back at the Orange Gate we met up with more of the Deal party, and when I saw the fence swaying there, Diana and I went up to it and started all over again until once more we were worn out. I felt as though my arms had been pulled out and the knuckles on my right hand were swelling fast. By this time of course it was quite dark, apart from the arc lights, and most of the activity was dying down.

I didn't want to go. This always happens to me. To hell with the cold, muck, discomfort etc etc, its people who count, and once I get to Greenham I forget ~~this~~ <sup>what I'm doing</sup> and just want to stay on. The people back in the real world say its like a drug, and I suppose they're right. Anyway, I found Hilary and the others, and they said I should stay, but Hilary had to get back so she joined the others in the Peace Van, 14 by this time, as some had walked from the main gate, so she took her things and went off with them. I was sorry to see her go, but she has commitments and I have now shed mine. Its taken a hell of a long time, but I think at last I've done it.

I didn't want to sleep in the car on my own, so Zoe said I could share her bender and Anne Marie was there as well. Luckily I had the sense to put my things in Bender 13 quite early on in the evening, as I can't remember what happened later on. I do remember we had supper, and a lot to drink, and Miranda took me for a walk on the Common in the freezing cold to try to straighten me out, but I can't remember what she said or why. The next thing I can clearly remember is being shoved more to one side in the bender as I was taking up too much room, and that I had a hot water bottle in my sleeping bags. It appears that Rebekha had put me to bed, then worried that I might be cold, so made a hot water bottle for me and put it in my inner sleeping bag. I do have vague sort of memories about this, but nothing is at all clear. Mind you I don't think I was the only woman in this state, and my only (weak) excuse is that it was a sort of reaction to the days activities.

During the night I was aware of a sprinkling noise on the bender, and when Anne Marie decided to get up, she pulled aside the polythene door and there was the world white with snow. It looked beautiful, but cold. Zoe and I stayed in bed and Anne Marie brought us coffee, so we sat and smoked and talked for an hour or so. She told me a bit about her life as a single parent, and her problems of bringing up her daughter on her own. Her daughter is now 14½ and had been there the day before but had gone back home and to school. It has not been an easy life for Zoe, but she, like me, gains enormous strength from Greenham.



The back of my neck was quite painful, and for a little while I did wonder if I was suffering my first hangover, but as some days later it still hurts, I think it is more likely that the pulling and being hurled to the ground, was the cause. Eventually we got up and went to the camp fire. God, was the place a mess. All those presents given us the day before were everywhere, with a sprinkling of snow and ice ~~xxx~~ on the ones outside any shelter, and mayhem and dirty dishes and pans everywhere. After breakfast we started cleaning up. It took us most of the day, but we took it in turns. ~~xxx~~ I ~~had a~~ <sup>saw</sup> a pair of red waterproof trousers which I put on, as John's which I had worn the day before were completely covered in gritty mud. I felt really smart with these on. Sian asked me if I would take her and ~~Nikka~~ to Newbury station as ~~Nikka~~ wasn't well, and a Dutch woman wanted to go to the Red Gate to find some friends. At the station it was nice to use a proper loo and wash some of the filth from my hands in hot water, but obviously a lot of Greenham women had been there, as the roller towel was really grotty, and the loo paper had run out. I said goodbye to Sian (who was going to Bath for a bath). I did some shopping in Newbury, and was rather conscious of my appearance, but in Peter Domonics I felt more at home, as it was full of Greenham women, looking and smelling like me. I picked the Dutch woman up, and went back to the Orange Gate, where I saw Diana and told her there were no Guardians left in Newbury.

We had some lunch and during it a woman rushed over and said she had just seen Diana being chased through the woods by a policeman as she'd been cutting the fence with Zuphie. Well there was nothing we could do for the time being, so we carried on tidying up and talking, and then Penny came back in a state. She had gone up the road to make a phone call, when a man had stepped out of the bushes on the Common and exposed himself. We went in a bunch to confront him. Of course we didn't find him, but we waited outside the phone box for ages with an American woman who was making calls to the Gates for hours. On our way back we realised that there was a lot of stuff left by the demonstrators and stalls etc, so I went back for the car, and piled loads of sopping polythene, portaloos, water container, and took it back to the camp. I don't think the car will ever recover, but why worry! A lot of the women had left by this time, and there were only about 15 or 16 of us left. For the first time, I got very cold that evening, and I was having to make rather frequent trips to the shit pit, which didn't help much, and my neck was hurting like hell. None of us felt much like drinking, but we found a bottle of Bristol Cream and some dates, so we had that our aperatif, and it went down well. The wind was picking up, so we wrapped ourselves in blankets and got tucked in for a quiet social evening. The one problem was what had happened to Diana and Zuphie? A couple of the women went down to the phone, and the cops denied all knowledge of them. We were going to go round all the gates and see if they had turned up there, but Mrianda said leave it for an hour or so, as she was certain they'd turn up. Five minutes later they arrived! They had been arrested, and eventually let out, had fish and chips and took a taxi back to the Orange Gate, but the story of their adventures is too long to put here.

We were all tired, and went off to bed with hot water bottles quite early. I had the bender to myself, but Zoe was coming back on Wednesday to go to court, so I promised I would look after it for her.

I didn't sleep at all well. At about a quarter to two I had to get up, put on boots and jacket, and go for a shit, and



my neck was really painful. I looked for some pain killers in the car, and was very conscious of being watched by the security people, and as the back lock wouldn't work I pretended it did. I couldn't find any pain killers, but went back to the bender and did sleep quite well, until the usual early morning insults and stones were hurled. A stone crashed against the bender which was frightening but no worse than the shouts of 'Get up you fucking, gobbing, smellies' etc etc. I felt very vulnerable in a bender on my own, ~~wixx~~ but I knew that I had support round me and when the usual chopper flew low round and round us, it was time to get up. I was going home on that day, so I tidied up the bender and left Zoe a 'thank you for having me' note attached to her hat.

I had some nice settling porridge for breakfast with coffee, and arranged with Cleise and Lesley that we would leave soon after 11 as we all had things to get back to. Diana said that they would make a bender for Cleise at Christmas and one for me when I came back for the New Year. It was sad saying goodbye especially to the Americans who had to go back home, but even they said they would be here again before long.

I should mention that a lot of us had felt it had been an odd night. Penny had had some extraordinary dream about bending metal and being blood sisters, and holding a bridge, and I was very puzzled when I went to the car in the morning to find my piece of ~~xxxxxxx~~ Greenham fence which is tied to the mirror, lying on the floor of the car, with the ribbon actually untied. Explain that one away!

We got away at about 11.30 and for a long time were quite silent in the car. I think it affects me in this way, but then Cleise talked about her life, and told me about her working class background, how she had been in the women's army nursing corps etc, and how she felt an outsider as an unmarried woman and in most places apart from Greenham. I dropped her at Earls Court, and took Lesley back to Canterbury. I know we'll all meet again soon.

One thing that amused us all on ~~Monday~~ <sup>Tuesday</sup> morning was that the American servicemen were very busy trying to repair the damage done on Sunday. Groups of men went round with trucks, pieces of wire, and particularly interesting, large baulks of timber to shore up the leaning posts and torn fences. We wandered over to look at the work, and when I saw the timber I said in a loud voice that we would no longer have trouble in getting firewood for the camp fire at the Orange Gate. They were not amused.