

27th - 28th April 1984.

This is the shortest time I have stayed at Orange, but with my mother being in hospital I felt I had to come here (Worthing) after only 24 hours. I rather stole the time at Greeham anyway, to gain strength, meet up with everyone, and also it must be admitted, have a good time. Well all those things happened, and now I'm in the toally artifical world of Worthing, my mother's flat, and the knowledge that I'm no further forward with anything much. I was prepared to tackle doctors, surgeons, the entire National Health Service, but never thought that no one important had made any decision on whether to operate or not. About the only thing I have achieved is a decent sun tan from being out of doors for those 24 hours.of fantastic really hot sunshine.

I drove up from here via Guildford, and am not sure that this was the right route. It took over two hours and I got to Greenham soon after 1. I was told at the camp fire that there was a general/ money meeting in the rabbit meadow, so set off there. Jill, Sally, Ruth, Penni, Rebekah, Anne from Reading, Isia and a Turkish friend and her young son, Miranda, Jan the waffle woman, Io and Maria who now live here rather than Yellow, Mira who is on the world cycle tour, etc etc, and of course the night watch, all were there or turned up during the time I was there. There were more than 40 women from other gates at the money meeting, and a great deal was thrashed out, although there was no real conclusion to anything. It was an interesting meeting in many ways, as personal grievances were aired over personalities, some women were in tears at times, but I think everyone had a chance to have a say of some sort. One of the real problems over money is how it should be admin~~istered~~istered. We do get a lot of donations and in the building socie~~ty~~ty there is something like £9,000, but at the moment little money is coming in, and a lot of money is going out. There are obviously various outgoings for food, dole money, general expenses, but how these requests should be funded each week is a problem. Some women feel that too much money goes to individuals for what could be seen as rather friv~~al~~alous requests. Everyone felt that Yellow had more than its fair share of money, but on the other hand, small gates like Violet, Indigo and Turquoise, didn't need much. I really was aware that there was a lot of gateism at a meeting like this, and different types of w<sup>m</sup>en do gravitate to different gates. One suggestion was that the seven gates should have an equal amount of money each week to sort out as as the women felt correct, but others said this would not be fair, as some had more visitors as well as regulars to cope with. One woman said that there women



from other gates didn't visit, and therefore when requests were made at the weekly money meetings, women from other gates had no idea of the integrity of the woman asking for money. If someone needed money for a holiday, it might be really essential for that particular woman to have it, but not for another. Trust had to be maintained by women there otherwise we could not exist.

There was another long discussion as to whether we had any use at all in being at Greenham. Had we outlived our usefulness? Cruise missiles were in the base, and the convoys had come out, and in fact had just brushed us aside. Most of us felt that it was vital that we were there, and the image of Greenham gave strength to the entire peace movement throughout the world, as well as small women's groups and local CND. If there were no Peace camps at Greenham, this would be a terrible failure on our part for peace, but also as supportive women we would have nowhere to go and there would be no completely free centre for women to live and express themselves as we can do ~~at~~ here. Most of <sup>us</sup> agreed that in the first place we had come to Greenham from CND or peace groups, but once we were there, many other issues took hold of us and however frustrated and even bitter we felt at times, we would stay.

The only really positive thing that we all agreed was that the meeting had aired a lot of issues which we <sup>re</sup> important, vital to us. There was a suggestion that the money being divided into seven equal parts could be put into practice for a trial period to see how it worked out, and those with surplus cash could donate excess to causes they felt useful. For this week, things would go on as usual and no other meeting was arranged for next week to sort out this new scheme.

Wow, this was not exactly an easy meeting, but I was glad to have been present. My only contribution was that there was no way that Greenham women should think of leaving there, although we still needed more women to come and stay to give the regulars a break, and more chance of holidays away from the tensions of life there.

We staggered back to the camp fire and put on sweaters as it was getting cool by this time. I decided that it was high time I slept out in the rabbit meadow, borrowed a gortex and put my sleeping bags in it. I had brought some mushrooms, someone else some frozen peas, plus rice and and some pasta, and Miranda produced a meal, and the drink was brought out. Ann cut my hair and the evening started. Io produced her clarinet and another woman a duck decoy whistle, and the songs and music started. We went



over to the gate, and I stood on my head, just for fun! Back to fire and party games, and then as I was tired I left a lot of them and went to my sleeping bag with hottie and cup of water. It really was a lovely night, the stars were bright and there was a nightingale singing for hours (near the shit pit I think). I took a long time to get to sleep, but I didn't mind as I was warm and fairly comfortable, although my hips rather stuck into the ground. I was surprised at some time during the night when taking a sip of water to find that it had a thick layer of ice on it, and I certainly did find the air very cold to breathe at times. The dawn chorus took over eventually, and I slept and dozed until about 9am.

Breakfast at the camp fire was nice, but it was much colder in that draughty spot than in the rabbit meadow, so before long I put on my shorts and went back there. Most of the regulars drifted in and it was so hot that before long most of us were in varying degrees of undress. It was marvellous. I read my book for a while, talked, Isia's very good essay on photography was read to us by Sally, then Miranda and Jan read my last piece on Greenham out. If ever I do get this writing together, Penni will illustrate it.

There were no evictions or police putting out the fire, apart from once at about midnight, although this happens all the time on weekdays. There is little round the fire, and the women from other gates were amazed that we still had any chairs left at all. Food and wood were in short supply this weekend, and I hope that more came after I left, as they were badly needed. We shared a lunch of rice, <sup>and</sup> tuna ~~and~~ salad and at about 3pm I got ready to go. I pinned up the broken zip on my trousers which I had broken while standing on my head, and said my goodbyes. All being well I shall be back in less than a week. Next Friday, I hope.

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4th - 7th May 84

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I got to Greenham exactly a week ago, but it feels like a lifetime. Since I ~~went~~<sup>left</sup> there, I've had a day's work, played golf (very badly) been at home, organised mother-in-law and Aunt Marjorie, and have come back to Worthing again, collected my mother from hospital, and now she is resting, and I am typing.

This time I went to Orange Gate via Worthing and a visit to my mother in hospital with Hilary, who has not been to Greenham since before Christmas. Mind you, she knows as much about the place as I do, as for months I have been telling her about it, the women, the life, the evictions, the actions, etc etc. I was relieved to find that it hadn't suddenly all changed, as she might have thought I was just a liar!

It was a marvellous weekend, culminating in the painting of Orange gate, orange, a bit pinkish perhaps, but the overall effect is great. There were so many women I knew there, from the regulars, <sup>Miranda</sup> Sally and Anne, Jill, Ruth and Penni, <sup>Jo + men</sup> Rebekah and Cathy, Charlie, Sian, Jay, <sup>Isia & Ellen</sup> Liz from Cornwall, Margaret, Lynne and Welsh friends, Maureen, <sup>elen</sup> etc, etc, then the more casuals, Christine, Ellie, Jenny, the Camden women, Jo, MohicAnne, Julie, Cherry and friend on motor bike, Anne-the-vicars-wife, who is so often there, plus masses of others. The main problem I had, was women <sup>who</sup> for three days came up to me and said 'Hello Ginette,' and although I knew the faces, I couldn't put names to them. On Monday, Liz, Karen and two others came from Canterbury, so the whole weekend was a non stop greeting of friends. Apart from these, other women came round from the other gates, so it was all quite exhausting.

Hilary and I had taken up a GoreTex which had been given by special fund raising from Deal. I slept in it, but was strongly advised by the regulars to put my name on it so that it would not 'disappear' but would be used at Orange Gate by any woman who wanted it. It now has painted on it in large red letters 'Ginette's, please return to Orange Gate Van'. As soon as we arrived we found Hilary a GoreTex and set our sleeping things up in the rabbit meadow. There was, as usual, a very cold wind blowing round the camp fire, but in the meadow it was warm and sheltered, and as Lynne and co had to go back to Wales quite soon, we had a smoke and then I took them to the Oxford roundabout near Newbury, so they could hitch home.

Hilary and I had bought some Worthing mushrooms, and I had a load of purple sprouting from the garden, so I offered to cook supper. We had these with brown rice and onions and garlic, plus the odd bottle of wine to wash it all down. We sat round the fire for a while and also in the rabbit meadow, but as we were tired we went to bed quite early. It was a magnificent starlit night, and the nightingales were <sup>amazing</sup> magnificent. Hilary and I decided that there were at least two if not



three of them, and earlier we had heard an owl, and in the dawn chorus, there was a ~~xxxx~~ cuckoo as well as the usual song birds. As usual I didn't sleep all that well the first night, but it didn't matter a bit. We were all rather concerned that Sian was ill. She hadn't been well for some days and was sleeping in the only tent in the rabbit meadow. She'd had a temperature, and was very much under the weather, not feeling hungry, her eyes hurt (in the end I lent her my sun glasses). There was a sort of rule that we felt that tents were not appropriate in the rabbit meadow, so we just have the one 'sick bay' tent up there. The evening before Hilary had had a bad headache and one or two others didn't feel that special. As it turned out it was not a good weekend healthwise for Orange Gate. On the Saturday morning, just as I was about to get up I heard a scream from the camp fire area then lots of voices. I didn't get up immediately, but when I did and went round to the fire I found Sally and Anne both had quite bad burns. I feel that I should have got up straight away and done something, as only the weekend before when I'd been staying in Brixton, I heard a woman screaming, and did nothing about that either, except lie there and feel my blood run cold. What had happened at Greenham was that one of Margaret's cats had caught a little rabbit and Sally was trying to rescue it from ~~the~~ its tormentor. She leant over the fire, her trousers caught alight, and she screamed and fell over and Anne put out the flames with her hand. The awful part was that Sally fell on the rabbit and killed it, but ~~what~~ <sup>what</sup> was more concerning was that she had a really nasty large burn on the front of her leg, and Anne had some nasty burns to her hand. They had put cold water on the burns, but Anne, Francis and I decided that they needed treatment, so we went round in my car to upstairs ~~and~~ Yellow, and hauled Sarah Hipperson out of her sleeping bag, to come and have a look. She is a trained nurse and after she had inspected the damage, was quite prepared to treat it, but had to have proper bandages and sterile dressings. She, Hilary and I went to Thatcham, got the stuff, and Sarah did an excellent job on dressing the painful and unpleasant burns. I took Sarah back to Yellow and came back for breakfast, at almost midday. Sally was very shocked and we persuaded her to lie down in the rabbit meadow and have an easy day.

It was so nice that in the end most of us ended up in the meadow, sitting, lying, dozing, reading, talking, feeding the invalids, smoking, drinking, etc etc. Some women came round from Green and told us that there was going to be a meeting about the action ~~at Green~~ <sup>round the base</sup> the following afternoon. Hilary went off to see a friend at Green, and the meadow was full of little groups of women



and children in varying degrees of dress and undress, enjoying the sun and cursing the clouds.

I've just realised that I'm making myself sound even more idle than I actually was. By the time I'd been there 24 hours I had done two water and one wood run. The water collection was something I had always avoided before, and now I know why. Jill suddenly had a panic on Friday night when it was dark, that there was little water at Orange. Apart from drinking and cooking water, we are all very aware of fire hazard. We have had two fires near the camp fire and rabbit meadow, both started, we are sure, by vigilantes. The women put both of them out before too much damage was done, and before the fire brigade arrived, but the whole area is parched with masses of dead bracken and gorse all over the common. We have been warned many times by the fire officer about the danger and he says that fire can spread faster than we could run, so keeping a good supply of water is essential. The Friday night session was a fiasco! First it took some time to locate the standpipe fittings, as we went to upstairs and of course they were downstairs. We'd all had a bit to drink and it was very dark. Jill drove us in the brown van, and to put it mildly we all got a little damp, in fact I got bloody wet. The containers are very heavy and its very hard to see when they are full, and the most likely way is when the water floods out of the top all over the woman holding it. The second time was slightly easier as it was daylight, but Anne's car got rather wet as we lost the lid of one container. Water runs are fine on a really hot day, and without doubt not in my car! The wood collection was also essential. Although we had a certain amount hidden in the gorse for emergencies, we felt it would be good to go on to the common and collect enough for the weekend of timber lying around. Once again Jill drove the brown van and Hilary, vicar's-wife-Anne and I went. Actually this was very pleasant. It was really hot in the woods and there was plenty of timber just ready for burning. We got a huge pile and Jill had to drive back on her own while we walked, but its amazing how quickly really dry wood does burn, and by Sunday I did another of my horrible organising things, and asked everyone sitting round the fire to go and get an armful of wood. Actually most women did it quite happily as Sunday was a lousy cold day and it warmed everyone up.

Saturday night at 8pm I produced my bottle of bubbly and about ten of us sat with out feet and legs in Sally and Anne's sleeping bags, drinking and celebrating Simon's wedding. Sian crawled out of the sick tent to be with us, and I was very conscious of Sally's burnt leg which I tried not to touch. Ellen did a belly dance and luckily



Cherry fairly early on had offered to go to the off-licence, so we had a whip round and three more large bottles of wine were consumed. There was a little crescent moon shining with the stars and nightingale was trilling in the distance. We all went to bed quite early again, and awoke to dull grey skies with a tiny bit of drizzle falling. Its quite OK in the GoreTex, but the getting up and dressed isn't so easy in the wet, but I managed it and went for coffee.

Oh God, more trouble. Isia had brought her lovely cat Lucy with her, and unfortunately, someone had brought a dog to our camp and the cat and dog started fighting. Well, Isia tried to separate them, and Lucy bit her hard on her hand. I had a look at it, and decided that Sarah was needed again. This time Rebekah came with Isia and me, and Sarah said that without doubt there was nothing she could do, but Isia must go to Basingstoke hospital, have it looked at properly and probably have a tetanus injection. I was going to take her, but Sally, Anne and Rebekah wanted to go and visit American Liz who was in there ~~with~~ having just had her appendix out, so they all went.

At last I got my breakfast, or was it lunch, I can't remember. Then much earlier than expected Ellie turned up. We found a good place to put the tent up, near where Jill sleeps. It was blowing about in the wind a bit, as the ground is so hard and stony its ~~hard~~ difficult to get the pegs in firmly. Still it was a nice place, on bracken which made it comfortable.

Some of us decided to go to the meeting at Green later, Hilary was very busy with Ruth and others gardening in the burnt area. They have cleared and dug the ground and are planting vegetables for use during the summer. In the end I took Ellie and Maureen and Anne-the-vicars-wife, and Jill went with Jay and another woman. The meeting took place in the middle of nowhere, so we couldn't be overheard. I saw Shirely from Faversham and also Canadian Stephanie, who decided to move to Orange the next day so I took all her gear back with me. The meeting very soon split into two, one group to have more action than the other. Jill and I decided that it would be better if those from Orange also split, so that we knew exactly what was going on. We must have been kidding ourselves, nobody knew any more at the end than at the beginning. In my group of about 40 women, the only ones who had any ~~xxxxx~~ idea of actions were Anne Frances and myself, so I'm afraid to say that between us we more or less took over the meeting. Everyone had their say, and the general consensus was that we wanted to paint the fence but if the area where the individual woman was, was swarming with cops, then we wouldn't do anything. They seemed to be enough paint around, although Jill said she had got camp



money to buy more if necessary. I'm not even sure what the other group decided, but I do know they split up again into smaller groups. It was all very typically Greenham, and in the end, I think everyone decided to do their own thing, but as far as possible, whatever this was, it should take place at 3pm.

Eventually we wandered back to Orange, and eventually got supper. There really wasn't much to be had unfortunately. What is happening is that visitors are not bringing nearly so much food as they used to because of the evictions. Also there were a hell of a lot of women staying, all wanting food. Jill and I ended up by eating out of the wok together. Some of us decided to go to the pub that evening for a drink for a change, and just as we were about to go, Christine turned up, and came with us. I took her and Ellie and Tony had Isia, Ellen and MohicAnne and Jill and Jay. We were chucked out of the first pub as Jay had been banned from it previously, so we went into Newbury and had a good evening there. I was careful not to drink too much as I was driving, but we took some cans back with us, and sat round the fire for a while. I showed Christine the GoreTex, and we all piled off to bed.

It was a very windy night, but at least the next day the sun was shining. I got up at about 9 and took coffee back to the tent, and by the time we eventually surfaced, the whole of Orange Gate was swarming with day visitors, flying kites and generally wandering around.

More and more women turned up, ~~inxxxxxxx~~ and somehow I didn't get breakfast until after 1.30. At Orange, we had decided amongst ourselves that we wanted to paint the gate its proper colour, so we all met with our pots, brushes, rollers, bits of rubber tied to sticks, etc, all dressed in appropriate clothes, polythene bags, waterproof gear, hats (Ruth had a pair of knickers round her head) and marched firmly to the gate. Fantastic! The police just watched up. That nasty, rusty dull old gate was transformed. At one point I remember being lifted onto Miranda and another woman's shoulders, and painting the top of it, and my brush was just the right size to poke through the mesh to paint the fastening. While all this was going on, other women were painting signs and symbols all over the road in a variety of colours. It was a good paint-drying day, and although we all got pretty well splattered, the paint was not too smudged by people walking over it. Then the police reinforcements came out. They made a couple of token arrests, and took away <sup>any</sup> pots and brushes that they could find lying around. On the whole I don't think they were particularly worried by the action, but we all felt better for having done something positive.



A lot of the visitors stayed round the gates singing, while the rest of us went back to the rabbit meadow. I had finished my two small pots of paint, so joined them there in the sun. We sat around for a while, talking and enjoying the sun again. Hilary and I decided to leave at about 6pm and take Cathy and Ellie back to London with us. We also thought we would have an Indian take-away in London, as there was still not a lot of food. We took the tent down, and started packing up the car, when suddenly, out from the gate came women in vans. They had cut their way in over on the north side, and had been caught, but the police were letting them out (they had painted symbols and slogans on the runway) without many arrests. Karen was in a hurry to get round to Violet, so I took her in the car, came back and said my farewells to everyone and the four of us left Greenham again. Sadly.

Another weekend full of friendship and incidents. I hope there will be no more accidents. They are frightening. It is still extraordinary how this word of mouth does work among the women. We had coachloads at Orange. The police really don't know what we are going to do. We thought for a while we had a 'plant' put amongst us, but we were wrong. I'd like to go to Brawdie for my birthday, but as yet I'm not sure if it is possible. The police are just as unpredictable as we are. When they released the women from the vans one copper suddenly called out a name. A woman came forward and he handed her a pen with her name on that she had dropped inside the base. A MOD policeman whom I'd seen before, greeted me with 'Hallo, you're here again are you? How are you keeping?' Cats and mice keep on playing these games, and the end is nowhere in sight.

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30th May - 2nd June 1984

This trip to Greenham was vital. I had to recharge my batteries. I left my mother with lunch on the table and got to Orange Gate before two o'clock. The only women around were MohicAnne and Julie, wandering round eating breakfast/lunch. Jill was money woman for the week so she was at a meeting, Anne Francis, Reading Anne and Sally were in court, and Ruth appeared later that day. I never saw Anne the vicar's wife as she was sent to Holloway for 30 days, having refused to pay her fine on Christian principles. Reading Anne has a week in which to pay, so she organised with her bank to pay in 1p and 1/2p pieces. £75 in that sort of coinage takes a lot of counting!

The changes at Orange were mainly that the fire was back in its old place away from the trees, and there are no soldiers on duty at present. Instead the MOD police are very much in evidence and some of them patrolled with large alsation dogs. MohicAnne and Julie were rather concerned because the gate had been shut, and the rumour had gone round that cruise convoy was about to come out. At the moment Yellow is completely ballsed up by the roadworks, and round Blue there are works again on every road in that area do do with drains, so the only possible gate to bring the convoy out is Orange, and it had been seen inside driving round. I said that I'd see what was happening and went round to Red where the women were sitting in the sun. Just as I was talking to them, 'Annabell' with a load of women came round to say that all was quiet, the gates had been opened and they had been right round the base, so I returned to Orange, and got myself organised in the rabbit meadow with Gortex and sleeping bags near Ann and Sally. We talked, read and dozed for a while, and I caught up on all the latest news. Sian and her hepatitis is much better, and is having a holiday in Wales. The camp at Brawdie was a great success with lovely weather and lots of actions. Miranda is cycling back to Orange slowly along the coast, and Rebekah had to go straight to London. Anne gave me a lovely birthday card from Diana, and they all said they wished I had been with them in Wales. It was all quite quiet and peaceful, and the three other women who were in the tent packed up and left. We had supper and a jar of lemon curd that Julie and MohicAnne made, and a large bottle of my homemade elderberry wine, and drifted off to bed in good time.

The nightingale sang for me and the night was mild and fine. I didn't sleep very soundly, but felt peaceful although there seemed to be an enormous amount of traffic coming and going all night through the gate. At one time I wondered if the night watch had



gone to sleep as it sounded like huge vehicles on the move, but I was too warm and comfortable to get up and find out. I had arranged with the night watch to call me just before they left, so ~~xxxxxxx~~ they got me up at about 6.45 and I went round to the fire. It was a bit of a mess round there, so I did a big wash up and tidy up before I had breakfast, and by that time Reading Anne was up and ready to go to work. Julie and <sup>Jill</sup> Anne were next up and I went off to phone my mother to check on her, and when I got back Jill was off trying to organise the distribution of money round the gates. Sally, and Judy (from Indigo who had stayed the night) and MohicAnne were around, and we sat round the fire with cups to tea and coffee and Sally started reading Paradise Lost out loud to us. (We are ~~known~~ known as the cultural gate!) Before long the visitors started ~~xxxxxx~~ arriving. A minibus from Wales with Dot (who I'd last seen on the soaking water run) with her daughter who'd been arrested on the fence painting day, and was therefore in court that morning, plus some other friends from Wales. We sat and talked and ate, and other cars and visitors arrived with wood etc. The bailiffs also came, took our rubbish and told us to move the large pile of wood which was very visible by the fire, to behind the trees, so that if the boss turned up, it wouldn't be seen.

At one point I went round to the rabbit meadow for a few minutes, and when I came back, all the women were very worried. It appeared that 5 women from Hereford had got out of their car and were walking by the fence. One woman stopped and put her hands on it, and at that moment and MOD policeman, obviously off duty as he had an anorak over his uniform came up to her and said that she was tampering with the fence and he was arresting her for criminal intent. She protested, and her friend stepped forward to check the number of the policeman's shoulder under the anorak, and he grabbed her and said he'd arrest her for assault. Anyway he took them both inside, and of course their friends were frantic. Everyone rushed up to the gate, but got no help there, and eventually the women were taken off inside to Yellow to the interrogation room. Hours later their friends were still looking for them, and we never heard what happened in the end. This is typical Greenham Common for you. Women walk round the fence, touch it, pull it, cut it, and nothing happens, but suddenly, bang, a woman gets arrested for doing nothing at all.

When Jill came back she and I decided to go and find out about an old white van which had been impounded some weeks before and was still in the pound, but we felt it would be worth while to get it out and use it as a store for eviction times. We gave MohicAnne a lift to the Oxford roundabout as she had to go home to sign on, and



eventually found the pound in, of course, Pound Lane. First Jill tried the key in the wrong vehicle, but in the end we located the right one, which was decidedly tatty, with no tax disc or battery. We arranged to see the boss man the next morning about recovering it, but in the end we found that the tax disc had probably been sent back for refund and the vehicle was not insured, so we left it for the time being.

Back at Orange Reading Anne was back, Ruth was digging a shit pit (most necessary) so Anne and I did a water run in Mabel. We didn't get nearly ~~so~~ wet this time, but those containers are damn heavy. My aching shoulder served me right for trying to keep up with Anne, she is much younger and stronger than I am!

I ~~cooked~~ supper for the seven of us, Anne, Sally, Ruth, Julie, Judy and Jill, of sea spinach from Brawdies, and scrambled eggs and cheese on toast. We sat and hoped that a night watch would turn up. It didn't, so in the end, Judy and Ruth did the first turn and then Jill and I took over at 3.30. At about a quarter to two I was aware that the rain was starting, so I zipped up the hood of the gortex, but I couldn't make myself close it up completely. It brought back terrible memories of when I was a small child and my sister would pull all the bed covers over me and sit on me. I thought I was suffocating. A terrible sensation. Anyway, the Gortex was fine, but it's bloody hard to get out and dressed in the rain without getting wet, but I managed it, and drank my orange juice, put on my woolly hat and sat by the fire with an eiderdown over my legs, a roaring fire and a huge golf umbrella over me. Jill laughed like hell when ~~she~~ saw me and went for her camera, but she was only too glad of the shelter, and in the end it was Reading Anne who laughed at us, and some of the vehicles <sup>driven</sup> going in and out, turned and looked at us. Jill and I sat there drinking coffee, and smoking, until 9am, we never drew breath, we just talked, and hardly noticed when it got light. Mind you it was such a wet drab morning that even at nine o'clock it wasn't that light. It rained all morning, and after various chores Jill and I felt it was time to get a bit of rest. I had a kip in the car and Jill in her sleeping area under a piece of plastic. Julie got us up at about 1 as we wanted to go to a meeting at Green. I made a bit of soup and Judy came with us, Julie went to have a bath with a woman who turned up with all the essentials we wanted plus a Guardian and offer of a bath. There are some marvellous women around. That is just the sort of support we need. We drove round to Green in a bad thunderstorm with the roads awash, but by the time we arrived it had almost stopped, so we sat in the clearing and the amazing meeting started.



The essence of the meeting was to plan the start of the révolution! A new experience for me, and I think for all of us. Some of the women felt and feel that we have been at Greenham for a long time, we have had some fantastic demonstrations and support with 35,000 women turning up to circle the fence and to pull and cut the fence on other occasions. But, the media are more or less ignoring us, many people in this country think there are no longer women at Greenham, the cruise missiles are in, and more are coming, and there is no way we can stop them. There are just not enough of us. At Easter it was estimated that about one million women turned out locally at the American bases throughout the country, but the news coverage was minimal. Many of the long term residents at Greenham are quite convinced that the nuclear accident/war will take place within a year or so unless something really dramatic is done to stop it. No more peaceful picnic-type demos, or even fence damaging parties, but something so big that the country will grind to a halt. What we want is ten million women to come to Greenham (or as near as they can get) for ten days from the 20th to 30th September. As we said it is a women's strike and the start of the revolution in this country. Wow! The way to get this ten million is a bit like a chain letter. Each of us will contact ten other women and persuade/cajole/insist/plead/etc that they come, and these ten must do the same to ten others. This only needs to be done six times to get ten million women moving. Without doubt the country will grind to a halt. We want the men to be supportive and look after children, old people etc, and keep the essential services going. Each woman would have to be self sufficient for her time at Greenham, and there ~~will~~ will be enormous problems over water, <sup>Poo</sup>shit pits etc, but we all feel that it is possible. Whether we will get ten million is academic, who the hell is going to count that number anyway? We also want women from ~~the~~ Europe and the rest of the world to come. We are not asking working women to have their holiday leave at that time, but to just not go to work for those days. If there are enough prepared to do this, there is no question that they will get the sack, as work all over the country will stop. There just won't be enough people free to do it and the men will have to look after the children anyway. There are the usual reasons for not having men being actively involved with us, but their support is essential. If the authorities stop women at the ports, for example, the women will just have to jam the ports, or where they are stopped and disrupt everything at the place where they are.



We sat and talked about this for some time and everyone had a chance to give her opinion. I did say that I thought ten days was a long time and would rather have about 5 days, but the general consensus was that to have a real impact that amount of time was not enough. Rebecca Johnson reminded us of the Lysistrata story of the women of Athens, and said that they must have had their problems just as much as women today. We had to think big to make this work at all. Jane Denning said the same and the rest of us agreed. We then sat and discussed what sort of leaflet should be produced (by the next day) for Jane to take to Speakers Corner as she was talking at the anti apartheid rally in Hyde Park, and she wanted to have something prepared to talk about and have leaflets to hand out. We all had a chance to put forward our ideas, and it was hard not to sound like an advert. In the end we agreed unanimously that whatever the poster or leaflet said, it should be put under the heading 'Ten Million Women - Ten Days.' // We all felt that this huge gathering should not just be about the nuclear issue, but women's struggles for many things. There would be posters against rape, the colour question, and we must appeal to oppressed women of all types. We felt that if possible children should not be brought to Greenham at this time. As I've already said, it would be no picnic, and violence could well come from the authorities though fear of that vast number of women. We envisaged cars parked for miles up the M4 and all round Newbury as women tried to get as close as they could to the base. Everything would ~~grind to a halt~~ <sup>stop</sup>. We didn't have time to discuss what actions should take place or any details, this was just a meeting to get the idea started, out of the women's heads on to paper. //

Lisa had been making notes of all the comments under the shelter of my umbrella during the showers, and we left half a dozen women to put these notes into some sort of order for the leaflet. Apart from anything else, the following day was the first Saturday in the month when visitors are encouraged to come and visit the camps at Greenham, and we wanted to be able to hand out information to them when we came. Two thousand leaflets had been prepared and printed and handed round each gate by 11am the next morning, so it just shows what Greenham women can do if they put their minds to it.

Jill, Judy and I staggered back to Orange in a state of euphoria and shock. We told the others what had happened, and spent a lot of time discussing it. The other women could see a ~~lot~~ <sup>man</sup> of problems, but in essence they agreed that it will take place.

As the evening wore on, more women arrived for the weekend. Isia and Lucy and others from London and Jane and friends from Kent. Then the Friday night ~~night~~ watch, Lyn and her friends who had found in a



wood an abandoned night watchman's red and white striped hut, which they proceeded to put up. Its marvellous and really cheers the camp fire area up. There was plenty of wood and some wine and food, so we settled in for the evening. There were a few women who had come for the first time, Hilary with her little dog, just for a night watch and Charlie from Germany. Its nice to know that newcomers do realise we are still there. I ~~realised~~ <sup>thought</sup> that the weather was still rather doubtful, so put my sleeping bag and gortex next to Jill under the plastic sheet she had strung up. We went to bed quite early as we were both very tired having been up at 3.30 that morning. It did rain in the night, and I pulled the plastic a bit more over us, but Jill hadn't heard either the rain or me moving around. I suppose if I stayed long enough I would sleep as deeply as that, but it takes a while to get used to being outside, and I'm ~~xxxxx~~ not there long enough.

I got up about 9.30 and brought Jill a cup of tea in bed, but I had some phone calls to make. One was to check on my mother and the phone tapper must have had rather a shock as most of our discussion was about her piles, and I told her she must use the suppositories and how to deal with them! I arranged to be in London by about 6 that evening, and had already said that I would pick Karen up from Indigo and take her with me. In the end I took Lisa and Kim from Green as well, and it was good to have a car full.

We had a good tidy up and washed everything in disinfectant as we are still being rather careful because of the hepatitis. Apart from Sian, Hanna had it and Jane from Orange has been poorly and away from us for a little while.

The visitors arrived all day. I gave an interview to a Swedish journalist, talked to a German woman, some Dutch Labour Party men and women, Quakers from Canterbury and Herne Bay, etc etc. Its lovely to see so many people supporting us, but it does make the residents tired to talk ~~to~~ and answer the same questions all the time. We handed out masses of the Ten Million Women leaflets, and most people were enthusiastic. They agreed to have the leaflet duplicated and would pass it round to their friends. It was a start, and will build up from there, I know. *Reading Anne was packing Mabel rose put + I helped her.*

While all this was going on, Jill was talking to two Irish women who had stayed for a while at Orange and came back for their dole money. We are very short of funds indeed at Greenham now, and some of this money had been allocated to other urgent needs, but it wasn't just the money that was the problem, but the fact that these women felt they weren't made really welcome at Greenham because they



were working class and didn't fit in with the middle class women. This is a hell of a problem. We all feel that there are not enough working class women at Greenham, but how to encourage them is very hard. We were horrified to think that they felt they had been rejected by us, and it is something we must try and sort out. They feel we are superior, use words ~~the~~ don't understand, and even the fact that some women drink herb tea and eat odd food, (vegans and vegetarians are numerous) makes some of these other women feel like outsiders. Other women have told me that they think Greenham is a middle class enclave, and its only these with a privileged background who have the security to be at Greenham, as if things go wrong, they can go back home if necessary. This subject has come up many times, and we are aware of it, but more effort on both sides must be made for the inclusion of all women.

Just before 5 I packed my things in the car, including the rest of the French marigolds. Some I had planted at Greenham in the flower garden, and the others I wanted to take to Mongeham. I said goodbye to my friends, picked up Karen at Indigo and Lisa and Kim from Green. We got to London just before 7.

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28th June - 1st July 1984

I was going to go to Greenham on the 28th, but after a phone call from Sally at 2.30am on the 26th, I was even more determined that nothing would stop me ~~going~~. Sally phoned to tell me that the cruise convoy had gone out of Orange Gate an hour and a half earlier, and when I asked if she wanted me to come there and then, she said that was not why she had phoned, she just wanted to talk to a friendly Orange Gate woman. They had been pinned down by the police in the usual fashion, but Jill had managed ~~to~~ at some point to get into her car, lock it, and park it firmly in front of the gates. It hadn't been possible to tow the car away, but eventually they had bumped it to another position, then found that she hadn't locked the boot, so pulled all her possessions out, flung them into the bushes, and then pulled Jill out. She gave an interview to the Guardian the next day and on Wednesday 'Lovejoy Peace' made the front page!

I played a foursomes golf match on Thursday morning (and won) before the long and tedious drive to Newbury, arriving in the middle of the afternoon. Ruth and Penni, Sally, (Anne came later), Mohicanne, Margaret, Jane, Wendy from Devon, Joan, and about an hour after my arrival, Miranda on her bike. During the next couple of days, some of these went and others arrived. Julie with a woman from Rugby with her two children, Isia and Lucy with Jan and Josie from Gravesend, Christine and her neice Samantha, A French Canadian woman called ~~Laurie~~ <sup>LORRAINE</sup>, then Astrid with four Danish women, plus the night watch women each night, plus others whose names I never got.

The fire was in the open and most of the women slept near the fire under the trees, as vigilantes had been wandering round the rabbit meadow a week or so ago, and the women were understandably frightened, especially when they found a tennis ball filled with paraffin, and a wick nearby. Jill's plastic cover was still in its usual place, and Jay suggested that I joined her that night as Jill wouldn't be there until the next night. We talked and exchanged news for a while, then Wendy came steaming along in her car to tell us that the north side were being evicted. There were enough women to cope, although by this time it was nearly 5pm, and we really couldn't believe it would happen. We also had the hassle of the BBC film crew around doing a programme for Songs of Praise for some man who wanted some shots of Greenham camp as he sometimes brought wood to the camps. We were getting a bit tired of being unpaid extras, and started 'camping' up like mad and making a bloody nuisance of ourselves. In the middle of this the muncher arrived, so we rushed round and put everything in the vehicles, but funnily enough the film crew



promptly put their cameras away, and sat in their cars while the eviction was going on. We all felt that those scenes would make an interesting Songs of Praise, but perhaps it was a bit too controversial. The day visitors and bailiffs and film crew left, and I got out the dolmas I had made and the wine, and we sat and had an early snack before the main ~~meal~~<sup>Uomen</sup>. Money is very short at Greenham now, and the food stocks are right down, but we managed to have a good meal. It was getting cold so we moved the fire back under the trees. The Brick Lane legless chair is really good and very much appreciated. The ten million <sup>Uomen</sup> bowl is now in the crockery section, which is a huge pram.

Life after supper was not very peaceful. The rumours about the return of the cruise convoy started coming in. First we built a barricade down the lane with wood, chairs, boxes, earth etc, etc, and cars, then Rebecca Johnson came in her car and Jay and I decided to go with her to Yellow as that is where we thought the action would be. There were a lot of women there, all milling around waiting for something to happen. Sightings had been made only a few miles away, so the women decided to block the roadway to the gate with a fire, made on a palet, and dragged into position. More fuel was hurled on it and quite a blaze started. The police came along and tried to put it out, then the fire engine, so Rebecca, Jay and I hid behind the bus shelter over the road, as we knew that the police would surround the women as soon as the convoy was close, and we thought we would escape notice there. Well, we stayed, crouched down there for some time, and nothing more was happening, so Jay and I decided to walk back to Orange along the fence. This was the only occasion when I was glad to have the perimeter lights, as the going is very rough, and in places incredibly swampy, and you have to pick your way over bits of wood, and other woman-made bridges, otherwise you end up ankle deep in rusty coloured slime. It took me half an hour of really brisk walking, and Jay ran on ahead.

Women at Orange were just sitting around waiting. We wondered if the whole thing had been a false alarm, and as it was about 1.45 we decided to go to bed. I had just ~~xx~~ taken off my shoes and trousers ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ and crawled into my sleeping bag, when Jay shouted that something was about to happen. She had seen a lot of soldiers at the gate looking intently down the road. Someone had heard that it was definitely coming in at Yellow, so Ruth, Joan, <sup>Jane</sup> and I ~~leap~~ into the brown van and shot round in that direction. When we reached the main Basingstoke road, we were blocked by the police, so we turned the van round and drove back until we found a turning



which we thought would wind back towards the fence and Yellow gate. Well, it did come back to the fence, but it was miles to Yellow, and once again that evening I found myself floundering through the swamp! By the time we got to Yellow the bloody convoy was back inside. What had happened was that the last of the four huge vehicles had broken down about a hundred yards from the gate, and one of the other lorries had backed out from the gate and towed it in. Only two women had got close to the convoy and they had been caught by the police and taken inside. We heard that they had been taken to Newbury nick, so Jay and I went with <sup>Pip + another</sup> ~~two~~ Red Gate woman and went there to give them support. Fifty or sixty women turned up there and we keened for about 10 minutes. We certainly made a hell of a noise, and then Sarah Hipperson came out and told ~~xxxx~~<sup>us</sup> that she and Rebecca Johnson had not been charged, and they were free to go. In the meantime Jay and another woman had sprayed a feminist symbol on a police van, so we left and went back to Orange, with Joan who turned up, having last been sighted by me plunging through the swamp!

Back at Orange quite a few women were wandering around, so we told them what had happened, and as it was now about 4am and getting quite light, decided to go to bed.

Although I was exhausted, I must have walked miles that day, I woke up quite early with this damn cough, and started another day.

Friday was a comparatively quiet day. We expected the bailiffs who never turned up. Visitors came and went, we tidied up, MohicAnn showed me her art work which I thought was excellent, I phoned Somerset to contact <sup>my sister</sup> Gina and arranged that I would pick her up at Basingstoke station at 9am on ~~Saturday~~ Sunday, I took Ruth and Penni to the Newbury roundabout as they wanted to hitch to Wales, did a load of shopping in Thatcham etc etc. Greenham is now very short of money indeed... There was £10 which I took for the food, but spent a fair bit more, as we were very short of supplies, but in the end we had a very good evening meal, cooked mainly by Wendy. Donations are just not coming in at the moment and we have to keep enough money for petrol as well as food, to drive off in eviction time. I heard a sad story about Blue Gate who piled all their possessions in their van, then found they hadn't got a driver amongst them, so the bailiffs drove off with everything, except a saucepan of bean stew. They got most of it back, but it must have been terribly depressing. *Actually they broke into the pound + stole & back that night*

We talked a lot about the return of the convoy. We felt that the Orange Gate barricade had been good, but we had not been at all effectual about our own blockading, and there were plenty of women around. It hard to know what else to do that is going to really work.

The Guildford night watch turned up, and a few of us decided to



do a little decorating. Wendy and MohicAnne were the keenest, plus Julie ~~xxxxxxx~~ and Jane and myself. Half way to the area where we going in I suddenly decided not to continue. I'm really not sure why. It just didn't feel right for me. I wasn't frightened or terribly tired or anything constructive like that, but I just thought that that particular night was wrong. We stopped and I told the others and Jane agreed that she didn't really want to go into the base either, so we turned back. Nobody worried, the others just went on without us. Actually I'm glad to say they had a very successful time, and now one of the watchtowers is a very pretty geranium colour.

I went to bed at about lam, but it was not a good night for us. Julie had decided to sleep where the benders used to be on MOD land right by the fence. I'm not sure if this sparked off the disturbance during the night, but the soldiers shouted and banged and yelled and carried on about every 20 minutes during the night. Julie eventually gave up and came to the rabbit meadow, having had stones thrown at her, ~~and~~ At one point the noise was so dreadful that I got out of my sleeping bag and gortex, put on my trousers, and went to the camp fire to find out what the hell was happening. It was just the soldiers being bloody awful, but they certainly succeeded in keeping most of us awake.

Saturday was a much nicer day. The wind wasn't nearly so strong, and the sun shone most of the time. The dust at Orange is everywhere. It blows around all the time, and your feet get foul in no time at all, as well as the rest of you. At least it's a lot easier to wash properly, and the water <sup>in</sup> containers warms up slightly in the sunshine, so that you only need a small amount of kettle water for extra heat. I tried to make various abortive phone calls, and eventually found that Ellie wouldn't be coming as she had to work. I was still feeling rather tired, so Wendy and I decided to sunbathe and ~~xxx~~ doze in the rabbit meadow. Well we certainly sunbathed, but got no sleep and we talked for ages, then Christine and Samantha plus beer, cider and wine turned up, then Isia, Jan and Jose, so although it was a relaxing time I didn't get a chance to read even a single line of my book. Eventually hunger made us active again, and some of us decided to do a tour of the gates and buy some more booze for the evening. We had a pleasant tour round, and found there were quite a lot of women at most of the gates, but Indigo had only two, so we promised to send more to support them. Back at Orange, the place was buzzing. Astrid and her five Danish friends were there, plus night watch and others. A marvellous meal was ready. There were five different salads and three hot dishes. It really was a splendid meal. Then Astrid produced a bottle of ~~xxxxxx~~ rum to



go in the coffee~~es~~, and then a bottle of scotch appeared. We all sang Greenham songs and danced around. We made so much noise that two women from Red Gate heard us and came round to join us. There were 24 women round the fire that evening, and we had a great time.

As the painting session had been so successful the night before, we decided to try again. We had previously checked that the paint pots and brushes were still hidden in the bushes ~~xxxxxxx~~, so Wendy, ~~Lorraine~~ <sup>Lorraine</sup>, Jan and Jose and I decided that we would continue the brightening up of the base. We had seen some blue vans, and thought they would be much nicer with some decorations. The cutting went like a dream. My bolt cutters are great. First the fence, then the barbed wire, then across the path and more barbed wire. Somewhere along the line I must have cut myself as my hand was covered in blood, but I never discovered when or where. Once inside we crept up a path and stood in a little copse of trees and bushes to decide what to do next. We heard a vehicle driving round, <sup>+</sup>crouched down. We didn't hear it go away, and stood silently for a while. Then I started to cough. This wasn't fair on the others, so I said I'd go back to the camp and they could carry on without the extra hazard of one member of the party coughing every few seconds. I retraced my steps and went back to Orange without any trouble. I went to bed, and it wasn't until the next morning that I heard what had happened to the others.

The authorities have now decided that they no longer want soldiers or police to patrol, <sup>on foot</sup> but they drive round the base, and quite often just sit in a car and wait for something to happen. Anyway the four women started painting, heard a noise, dived for the bushes, were lying there when they heard a man's voice telling them to stay still until he had 'Toto' <sup>the dog</sup> under control. They had no intention of moving when they heard this, <sup>+ LORRAINE was watching with fascination a shaking star anagram</sup> so the police took them in the van to the interrogation room at Yellow. They kept them there for an hour or so. At one point the women heard over a police walkie talkie that they had seen me and gave a description, including my bolt cutters 'shining'. That was clever of them as the cutters are dark coloured and not shiny! The women were released at Blue gate and were given a lift back to Orange by the night watch.

On the whole the police are not too keen to charge women. I think they just want to stop us getting too bold and they just feel that without doubt we will go on getting in and out of the base at will, and it all costs too much in court cases and prison sentences. The security there is very low key at present. Di McDonald even drove her Dormobile in through Yellow Gate this weekend, and other women have cycled in the base in broad daylight before being caught.



I had to get up quite early again to meet Gina, and then brought her back for a coffee and she met some of my Greenham friends. She stayed there for a couple of hours with me, then I said my goodbyes. I left Reading Anne making an inspection pit for pink Mabel, thanked Astrid for giving me those excellent photos, and drove Gina round the north side to show her some of the other camps, collected the tow rope I'd lent to Blue Gate to haul a door up a tree to make a tree house, picked up a woman who wanted to go to Indigo urgently, and drove to London.

When I got home I found a post card from Cleis waiting for me. She's on holiday in Sark, but I know we'll meet up again soon at Orange Gate.

~~xx~~ Under 48 hours <sup>after</sup> cutting fence and barbed wire at Greenham, I had to use the bolt cutters again for quite another use. Under the eyes of a marine, I had to cut a very loose shoe off Domino. Everyone thought that the cutters were a useful tool to keep in the car, but I didn't let on what I usually used them for.

I sent Lovejoy Peace the Guardian cutting about her. I hope she gets it safely, as although I sent it to Orange Gate, I know that she is now living inside the base for as long as she can.

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