

Avryl and Tembre de Carteret

So thank you so much, Tembre and Avryl for joining us today to talk about your memories of Greenham and your family contribution, I would say, I think to the Women's Peace Movement. Would you mind starting off by telling me what brought you - so who went to Greenham with you and why did you go?

(Avryl) Erm well, that's a long story.

(Both laugh).

That's fine. That's fine.

(Avryl) Who was there at Greenham? Okay, it was myself and my mum. Tembre was about four years old. We went to Embrace the Base. And my niece was there she was about 15. And we had my sister was there, my erm, my neighbour's kids were there. She was about 15 another girl. And my friend Susie and her little girl who was your friend was there. So yeah, there was quite a few of us there. We went up to Embrace the Base.

Quite the crowd. And you came up from Dorset?

(Avryl) Yeah, in buses. Yeah. We lived in Dorset, and we went up in the bus. And erm, what got us there is because we were part of er, my my mother and I and my sister were part of a women's consciousness raising group. At the time, we were also part of a CND group. Erm we'd gone and done a march in London, a CND march, with a banner for the Bournemouth and Poole Women's Group banner - we've got the photograph in the book erm of us where we went up and did that, but I'm not sure if that was before Greenham or after it. So we were in the loop, if you know what I mean, we were in the loop. So that's how we heard about the Greenham. And we just knew we had to go up there and support the women. We heard women were coming from all different areas of England walking there and - or getting there somehow. And we just needed to join them.

Yeah, what were your first impressions when you arrived there?

(Avryl) Erm very, very welcoming, very welcoming. I think we were at Yellow Gate, but I just can't remember. Unfortunately, my memory is not that great. But I think we were at the Yellow Gate, which was the main gate - wasn't it? And I remember sitting and drinking tea and chatting to women and, and erm everybody was very welcoming and friendly. We felt at home there, felt safe there. I don't remember experiencing any of the aggravation that came at different times during that particular thing Embrace the Base. I don't think - I don't recall there being you know, any aggravation there with the police or, or the army or anything. My my niece who was 15 she said she went back again and spent three days there. And er, there was a lot of abuse that she got, she got called a whore and all sorts of horrible names, you know. And they tried

to arrest her, but because she was under 16 none of the women would offer to be her guardian so she couldn't be arrested. She reminded me of this on the phone the other day, she, she, she lives in Cornwall actually. And yes, so she was telling me that. But er, so yeah, it's it's hard to remember. All I know is that we were there. And I remember the fences being putting things on the fences, little bits of ribbon and children's toys and things like that. I remember that. I remember the holding of hands and the power that that came from that how we felt, you know, we felt like we were making a huge difference and a huge statement. You know, as women who were raising the children, we were, you know, we we didn't want to get nuked if you like, you know, because there was a real threat of the time that, you know, the nuclear, nuclear weapon could go off at any time. And we were, we were showing that how anybody could get into those bases to where these cruise missiles were, which we proved could be done.

Yeah, absolutely.

(Avryl) You know, and so, yeah, so.

Do you remember it Tembre?

(Tembre) I don't have specific memories about being at Embrace the Base. But when I see photos you know, I have I get a sense of it. I think I, I have a sense of the community of women and I would have had that growing up and I think that's what was really powerful for me, I think it would be in my cells if you know what I mean.

Yeah, like you absorbed it?

(Tembre) Yeah, I absorbed it. To think of the generations you know for my Granny Marlene to be there and then my mum and me to have that three generations - obviously there was other family members. But that's - more recently that's had a real powerful kind of impression on me because I'm a I'm a song leader, I'm a circle song leader. So I have been doing this for 20 years. So I'm about gathering women together and singing no matter your experience or anything like that. So I'm a songwriter and choir leader, community song leader. And it was recently when we were speaking about Embrace the Base and erm, and I was just so struck to the fact that if that's what I kind of absorbed as a child, how I feel, maybe that has really made an impression on the work that I've gone into. I just had this lovely, you know, sense of women holding hands and embracing, embracing each other, but embracing the base out of total spirit and love for our community and humans and as women and and I love the idea that there would have been singing and that I would have at least absorbed that and I find it really interesting and the work, the work I've gone on to and my songs would have a real connection with nature and, and us as humans and our interactions. So I love to think that that's

(Avryl) The connection is there.

(Tembre) That that was there. And I feel extremely erm, proud that I was there and that I was there with my mum and my grandmother.

It's amazing. And do you sing any of the Greenham songs?

(Tembre) Interesting recently - because I'm a, I'm part of the Natural Voice Network erm in the UK, and recently, I, I started to see if I can collect some songs. So there's lots - well it's really interesting, because obviously, the Natural Voice Network has been going for over 25 years. And there's lots of women there that would have either been there, or at least know the songs. So they shared some with me. So over the last while - because obviously all my work has gone online, I've been erm, I've been learning some of the songs and teaching them and it's amazing how some of the women that come and sing with me, go oh, I, you know, I know that song. And,

**(Avryl) Or my mum was there. And you might have held hands with her!
(Laughs).**

(Tembre) You know, there's a big online singing community that my mum's part of right now where women all over the world are singing regularly online with myself and my mum is part of it. So those songs, I'm slowly kind of getting a sense of them and being able to share them and writing really, writing songs.

Yeah.

(Avryl) It'd be nice if you could make a couple of songs out of her poems.

Yes, I was gonna - that's one of the questions that I've got written down! I was wondering, wondering that. Because so you've got this book of Marlene's poems - your grandmother and mother - and she wrote those. Was she living at the camp?

(Avryl) We never, we never stayed over. I don't remember staying over. I don't remember. But erm my mum died, sadly passed away 25 years ago when she was only 65. And that was in Dorset and we lived in Ireland. So we went over there and, and she, she left all these just boxes and boxes of poems and writings. And I remember over the years, she'd be scribbling poems and I'd read the odd one, but I didn't - yeah, I was busy raising two children on my own, two daughters of my own. So I said to the family, to the siblings, I'll bring those back to Ireland. And one day, I'll make a book out of them. So 25 years later, we get lockdown. (Laughs).

Yeah.

(Avryl) And I've moved I don't know how many places since. But I kept looking at those boxes. I must clean that room up. And I kept coming across

more and more boxes and bags full of like bits of paper napkins, old envelopes, recycled stuff, you know, she just scribbled things down - just so much stuff. And my whole lounge was just full of all this paperwork for six months. I started in July and I finished - when did we finish them?

(Tembre) Just before Christmas.

(Avryl) Just before Christmas. Yeah, it took six months.

It's quite a project.

(Avryl) So many poems. I mean, I sent you 52 that were related to, to war, nuclear weapons, and especially about Greenham. But I mean, the whole book is full of so many more as well. She started writing, I think, in the late 70s. Well, maybe before that. We were living, we were living in a squat at the time actually, because we'd be, we'd become homeless - which was something that followed us all through our lives - becoming homeless, and we came from a very poor situation where unfortunately, there was abuse from my Father. He was a, he was an alcoholic, he was violent and we were always on the run. So we were always moving on, children putting in children's homes and things like that. And my mother never really managed to handle her budgets and her money and we'd end up, being evicted and finding somewhere else to live. And in the middle of the '70s we - '75, '76 which is when I got pregnant with you - we were living in a squat at the time. This squat was one of those places it was like, open to all you know, my mum would take in all our friends who also called her Mum. And, you know, this is the time when she was her happiest actually. We were surrounded by fields and nature and this is when she started to scribble all the - she started scribbling on the walls in the lounge actually, I mean, it was a squat, you know, we weren't going to decorate. So she just started scribbling on the walls. And she must have eventually then put it down in on paper, you know, and that's, and that's where it all comes from. So she just carried on from there. And erm,

I love the idea that that might still be there underneath somebody's wallpaper.

(Avryl) Well, no, because they did demolish it. But we did go back after they demolished it. And we found bits of, bits of plaster with bits of writing on or drawings because we were a very artistic family. So we were always drawing on the walls doing graffiti or whatever. We were, we were called the local hillbillies, we were real hippies like. (Laughs). So yeah, so that's how it was.

And did you keep any of those bits of plaster?

(Avryl) I think one of us might have yes. I've got five other siblings, one of us might have but I, I'd say it's, it's gone by now. We would have taken bits home with us at that point, but it's gone now. So that's why I'm so surprised I've still got these papers of my mum's, you know, all these poems and things.

Yeah.

(Tembre) Erm,

Sorry go on Tembre.

(Tembre) No, just I think she, you know, she'd come from a very conservative, or, or kind of very contained childhood in terms of in Guernsey and I think and then obviously, and she married young and she was working hard and she nursed her mother and then she was raising kids.

(Avryl) Her sister died at age three of leukaemia. And then her mother died of breast cancer at 43. And my mother nursed her for the last three years at home. While she was pregnant with my youngest sister. My brother was two, I was three and my other sister was four and a half. And she also had her other sister who was 14. So she was you know, so she didn't work - she didn't go back to school after the war. She was she was a refugee from Guernsey in the Channel Islands where the Germans occupied the Channel Islands, as you know. And my mother had moved there from Yorkshire when she was five, their family moved there for work. And when she was nine, she was evacuated with all the schoolchildren on these big boats to England without her family, leaving her little sister's behind and her mum and dad. And she ended up in Glasgow, of all places. She'd never, she'd never been on a train in her life. And she wrote a story about it, it's in the book. She wrote a story about her time as a refugee and she was lost in Glasgow for two or three months, living in this erm,

(Tembre) Church, the basement.

(Avryl) This church, the basement of this church which she says wasn't very nice. Until eventually her parents who were then the next load of boats went over and my - her parents arrived with the two children to Yorkshire, couldn't find her and they had to put in a newspaper cutting a newspaper. I've got the cutting, saying you know, 'Quest for Missing Child' till eventually they found her. And she was only nine years old. And then when she was 14, after the war, they all went back to Guernsey with - minus her little sister who died of leukaemia. And then her M - when she became a bit older and married my dad and had a few children then her mum dies of breast cancer. So she was looking after, she was, she was a carer of all of them basically. That sent my grandad into a bit of a, his grieving sent him to drink even more than he already was and then my Father was a great drinking pal. And that's where the, the alcohol and the abuse started. And, and that's, and we in 1966 mum just packed a bag and we all got on the boat, and we ran away to England with us all, er five children at the time.

Did that feel scary or like an adventure?

(Avryl) Oh my god it was terribly scary. Yeah, we left everything. We left everything we knew. We left any relatives, which there was plenty. Who also when you've got that situation in a family of violence and alcohol, a lot of the family will step back. They don't want to know he's the black sheep - do you know? So she didn't get the support. And without her mum, I think our lives would have been very different if her mum hadn't died. Without her mum, she really didn't, you know, have my - and when her sister became 18 she moved to Totnes and went to college to become a nurse, which she did and, and so my mum was left with it all, you know, so she just had to escape to save us. And she wouldn't give her children up. And that's how we were sort of on the run in England, if you like, because my Father hunted us down. And he caught up with us several times. Another child arose from that. So there's six of us in the end. I ended up erm, running away from a children's home because every time we met up with him we'd lose the accommodation because he'd spend the money on drinks. And then we'd be back on the streets, back in the children's homes and got taken away by the police and literally dragged from her arms by the police - pulled away from her. She'd always get us back because she loved us dearly. And she always got a job, another job, another house and she'd get us back, you know. I ended up on the streets on my own for a few weeks. And then when they'd got another house down in Dorset - this was all up in Yorkshire - and then when they got another house down in Dorset, I joined them but that I, that didn't go well with my dad. And then I ended up in jobs that had living in accommodation for the next few years.

Oh right. So you're a very, I mean, a nomadic family.

(Avryl) Yeah.

A family full of resourceful, strong women.

(Avryl) Survivors.

Yeah, absolutely. And that has been passed down.

(Avryl) Yeah, definitely.

What do you think um is the - or why was it important, if you think it was, that Greenham became women only? What was the reason that it became women only?

(Avryl) Well, I suppose well it was important for women to stand up and be heard, and to have a voice. And, and, and they were fed up with the patriarchal system that didn't include them in any equality, didn't listen to them, didn't provide for them for their children, you know, the things that were needed for women to work or they didn't have the same rights, you know, so. And a lot - also there were other women, there was a huge lesbian community as well, a huge - and I became part of that community myself I

came out around about the same time and became part of that community. Erm, a lot of women just wanted to be, they felt safe with women. You know, I, I unfortunately, went into an abusive relationship. It's like I followed that pattern, you know. But I soon ditched it. It wasn't for me. I'd seen what it had done to my mum, you know. So yeah. And I think there was a safety with women that you couldn't find, I couldn't find anywhere else.

(Tembre) And I think that, I think that was a big part of for Marlene, was that it was like the first - it was like her world expanded. You know, she started to read books.

(Avryl) Oh yeah.

(Tembre) She started to go to groups and meet with other women and I think she suddenly found her tribe and found her community that if she could, if she could connect with other women and Greenham was part of that, and the marches were part of that. And to actually then, you know, and to be educated by her daughters as well in that and to be brought along, you know, Marlene would have come to many - Marlene would have come to Glastonbury Festival.

(Avryl) Oh, yeah, she would come every year. I was going from the '70s and she would come every year.

(Both Laugh).

(Avryl) But also I, also I followed, I followed a guru to India as well when I was 18. You know, I was looking for the answers. Because my life had been, consisted of no support basically. There wasn't support for women, there wasn't refugees. It was me running down the road and phoning up the police, them coming up saying, 'Ah come on Ted, that's enough. Let's walk you up the road.' And then dropping him off up the road. That's as much as we got. That's the only support we got, do you know. So, so I was looking for answers to my life and to my existence and to what was going on. And that's - I became very spiritual and I travelled a lot looking for those answers. And I brought that back to my mum and I brought vegetarianism back to my mum when I was 18. And she embraced that and she was vegetarian all her life, which I am also and Tembre. We, you know, we, we've embraced that forever. My mother was such an animal activist. You know, you'd go into her bathroom and you couldn't even go into the bathroom without having to look at posters of the most torturous things that were happening to animals. She was - oh, yeah, it was everywhere. It was everywhere on the walls, wasn't it? I mean, she used to have the t-shirts, she used to create things that she could go out and make a statement. You know, she was very, very colourful and very creative. And oh, she yeah, she was really into animal rights. Yeah, and women's rights and children's rights and she loved children. So yeah, and I think I think I was a bit of a pioneer and I brought these things back to her. And she was like me looking for answers. And she just, and she came along

with us. And it was like she became a sister, rather than the mother. Do you know and we all went along together, we all felt that. We always felt different. I have to say a bit. We call ourselves the outsiders. We didn't feel like we fit it in with society. I had such a different upbringing, you know, that. We did feel different, feel different. So we just followed our own paths, basically, which weren't always good choices, but a lot of learning. A lot of learning. Yeah, definitely.

(Tembre) I think that was what was special about Greenham was that you had women from all walks of life - didn't you?

(Avryl) Yeah, definitely.

Absolutely. Did you meet women there that you stayed in touch with?

(Avryl) I, you see I've been here for 30 years and somebody contacted us recently, Arwi?

Oh yes, yeah.

(Avryl) You know Arwi?

I know of her I was interviewing someone the other day who's, who knows her very well.

(Avryl) She said she'd love to chat but I don't remember her. And that's what's so cruel, actually, is my memory has erm yeah, I think, yeah, there's just so many things gone on in my life. I just, I can't retain it all, you know.

Yeah.

(Avryl) I can remember some - no I can't really, it was more about the women's groups. I know women from the women's group. Like there's a couple that have come to our singing now - don't they? From the women's groups in Bournemouth and Poole. And she remembers - they remember my mum very well and everything. So that's been a nice reconnection with social media. That's been really lovely. But erm yeah, I came over here - my children went to a Steiner School in England and that was closing down and I was living in a caravan in the backyard of it. I was cleaning the school every weekend to just keep my kids in the school like. And then eventually I heard of this Steiner school in Clare. So I just put the kids in this little caravan, I hitched it onto the car, and I said, 'Come on, we're off.' I said, 'Bye Mum, I've got to get on with my life.' You know, 'I've got to leave you now and, and get on with my life.' And off to Clare we went and we were getting away from Thatcherism as well, you know, the 80s and all that was going down there and, there was no opportunities for me as a single mum in England. I didn't find any. Whereas I came over here, and my life just opened up here. You know, it really did.

(Tembre) And you continued on your path.

(Avryl) And the community of the Steiner School was good. And when you say I continued on my path I um, I founded a women's group here. And from that, we we founded the Clare Women's Network which consisted of about 20 to 30 women's groups all over Clare. And we started applying for funding and we - I worked for them, eventually we got enough funding to employ me and other women and we ran all sorts of courses, assertiveness courses, and you know, we ran a mother and toddler and women's library and singing, creativeness anything we could think - we used to have great annual International Women's days. You know, we used to do all that. And yeah. It was great, actually. Clare Women's Network is still going but I'm retired now. But erm yeah, it's still going through. I feel that was a lot to do with what happened back in England, and I brought it over with me and started things up here.

Would now be a good time to hear one of Marlene's poems?

(Avryl) Yeah, sure. So yeah, this one's called '**Women Strong and True**'. 'The women at the Peace camp this winter will be cold and damp. They are trying to stop this cruise, you know, taking all the ship and nobody maybe blows. These men who work there are quite mean and are terrified there will be a scene. The women are there for peace in their lifetime, go to prison or pay a heavy fine. No violence! They proclaim, as they put these men to shame. They are women's strong and true. Have you the guts to do what they do? I admire them sisters all, I will be there help break that wall.' So that gives you a taste of the kind of poems that my Mum would write. She was, it was simple.

Yeah,

(Avryl) To the point.

But powerful.

(Avryl) But very powerful. I'm so proud of her when I read - because I hadn't read all these poems and and I think, wow, I wish I'd sat down with her and read them at the time that she wrote them. I really do. I missed out there. They are very, very full of compassion and anger.

Yeah.

(Avryl) Obviously those that I sent you up to you about Greenham and about the war. But the rest of the book is, is, is about, you know, she has times of deep depression as well. Do you know, after what she's been through it's not surprising.

No, it's not at all.

(Avryl) So there's, there's poems about how she was coping with that and, and poverty as well.

Do you know if she shared any of those poems at the time? So, because it, you know, in that poem, she asks the rhetorical question, you know, in it, so it sounds like she's trying to get more people to go.

(Tembre) Oh, yeah.

So do you know if she was shout sharing them anywhere?

(Avryl) Maybe she would she might have been sharing them at the women's groups she was going to and the CND groups, I wouldn't be surprised. I know that she sent some up to Spare Rib.

Oh right!

(Avryl) She sent some up to there. Erm, so I don't know if they got published or anything. I mean, she was - when, when I came to Ireland, when she died I bought a - boxes full of Spare Rib magazines. She had kept every one. And I was going to give them to the archives of Spare Rib. But unfortunately, we had a fire in one of the houses we were in and they were burnt, which was a shame. But that was lovely to have them all. And yeah, so who knows maybe there was some published in there or, I don't know.

Because if I was in a group at that time, if I didn't know about Greenham, when it was happening and I heard that poem, that will be like a rallying cry to me, I would want to know more and I'd want to go.

(Avryl) My Mum was always talking to everybody about it. And she did take - we went up another time for the walk, the Aldermaston walk.

Ah right.

(Avryl) This is back as well. And I remember she bought some other friends up as well. You know, I can't remember their names or anything, but she'd be out there rallying around trying to get people to open their minds and look to see what was going on and stand up, you know, and be counted, basically. Yeah.

You've talked a little bit about songs and and obviously the poetry. Do you remember any other arts that were there? You know, you mentioned briefly the banner that erm, the Bournemouth and Poole groups had.

(Avryl) Bournemouth and Poole Women's Group banner. Yeah I, I'm sure we must have been part of that but I just don't remember, but I'm sure we

probably were part of making that banner. But I remember at Greenham when we, she went to Greenham she had one of these erm ... oh ... it was a coat, it wasn't an Afghan coat but it was another type of coat of those times. It was a bit like you would see a Moroccan man in the desert wearing with the hood with a tassel. It was like, it was striped brown and black and cream. It was like that - really, really rough wool, those kinds of coats I can't remember, like a Turkish coat or something. And she embroidered, embroidered and sewed all night writing - I wish to god, I could remember what she wrote on the back of it, you know, to take for the walk, that was it, for the walk so that everybody could see you know what she was saying. You know, stop, stop the nuclear bombs or whatever it was, you know, she would do that.

That's incredible. Wow.

(Tembre) I remember actually, I can get a sense of that coat. I kind of get a real visceral feeling of the wool of it.

(Avryl) I think she's wearing it on the picture in the book. But unfortunately, it's just from her shoulders up.

(Tembre) Yeah.

(Avryl) So yeah, she's wearing it.

Amazing. Yeah, it'd be brilliant. If you would be able to, if you're able to scan any of, any of those pictures or anything to send to us we'd love to have, have it all in the archive.

(Avryl) I just wish we had more like my niece said to me the other day, 'Why didn't we have phones back,' - not phones, 'cameras back then?' We didn't - we were too poor, we didn't have a camera because we'd have taken those photos of what was going on.

(Tembre) We have seen some of the photos on the website though uploaded. And erm, I find that amazing. All the videos online. You know, I've really you know, in since since Mum has collated the book and I helped to do the graphics side of it and everything. Even that is just suddenly something ignited in me and went looking online. And erm yeah, it's just been really a powerful journey to kind of re-revisit this and get to know, get to know Marlene through her poetry and get to know what what all the women did at that time because I was so young. I, you know, like, I was probably dragged along more than anything and probably cold and ...

(Both laugh).

(Tembre) ... hungry, probably. But you know ...

(Both laugh)

(Avryl) Not washed!

(Tembre) ... they had to do what they had to do. We were alive, we survive and that's the main thing. You know, whatever we went through as kids or families or, you know, erm it's really powerful that they gathered.

(Tembre) You were used to Glastonbury anyway! So you, you know. (Laughs).

(Tembre) Yeah, I was pretty hardy.

Sounds like it was pretty normal to you Tembre, it's just another day in your family!

(Tembre) Yeah. And I'm happy to say that erm, you know, as much as I'm not part of marches particularly I feel like the work, I feel that work has followed on to me in terms of what I do in collecting women together and through song and awareness. And erm, and I, and we have a very active 10 year old who seems to be very passionate and because of lockdown, she's, she's gonna turn out to be a right activist I think. (Laughs). It's in the blood. And she can't read all the poems that my granny has written because a lot of them swearing in or ...

(Both laugh).

(Avryl) Heavy!

(Tembre) Maybe when she's older she will but she's definitely er, got her granny's, her granny and her great granny's blood in her.

She continues to weave the web.

(Avryl) We also had a newspaper cutting that I found amongst all those, and it was of women holding hands around the base.

Oh, yes! I think that's in the PDF that you sent me.

(Avryl) Yeah, yeah. We also have a newspaper cutting of when we were living in those squats and they evicted us. It wasn't just our house, it was a little lane in the middle of the country and there was about six other houses. And in our driveway, we had erm this couple from Australia with two small children who arrived in a double decker bus. So we let them park up outside and they plugged the electric in and that. So they were there. And there's this whole newspaper article about us all being evicted. (Laughs). I was pregnant with Tembre at the time. (Laughs). So it was great to find that again that Mum had kept that.

Yeah definitely. Should we have another poem?

(Avryl) Yeah, yeah.

(Tembre) There's this one here.

Yeah.

(Tembre) Which is 'Women of Greenham Common' and it says, 'Women of Greenham Common have taken a stand. They have been arrested by the law of the land. These are our sisters to prison they are sent. For the love of Peace, man repent, repent. We must rally to their aid every step of the way. Mothers, daughters friends go forward for Women's Peace Day.'

Lovely.

(Tembre) I know.

(Avryl) I like to think that this helped her so much to write everything down. Because I know myself, I can't sleep at night if I've got something on my mind. I need to write it down. You know, and I think I like to think that this obviously helped her.

Yeah, absolutely. I'm sure that it did. Yeah. Well, she was clearly so prolific in her writing. It seems like it wasn't a pass time. It was a need, a necessity that she had to get it all down.

(Avryl) Yeah.

(Tembre) Yeah, I'd love to think that it kind of came through her as well. Because I find that with my songs, they kind of come come through me and you can't kind of rest till you've laid them down. And I love to think that - you know, I'm sure she went through a lot of turmoil. You know ...

(Avryl) Isolation, loneliness, depression.

(Tembre) She was by herself a lot. She really, you know, I'd say she did really use this as a tool for herself to erm, to write and connect.

But how amazing that she could access that tool. Like you said she was, you know, she only started reading books and things like that later in life so that's not, you know, that's some inner spirit that's made her find those things I think - isn't it?

(Avryl) Her - no matter what, if my mother didn't have a penny in her pocket, but she had, like your books behind you - I don't know if that's a picture or real.

It's wallpaper.

(Avryl) But my mother had a list of all her books in every bookshelf and they were everywhere. My Mother would buy a book at the drop of a hat and not think of food.

Yes.

(Avryl) She had, she had we've got a huge book list in the, in the back of the book. You know, she had Hermann Hesse, Gurdjieff, erm Krishnamurti - well you name it there. You know, and Erica Young - all the all the famous feminist women, I can't think of their names at the minute you know, but they're all they're all in there all that - Simone de Beauvoir, you know, she read them all like, she's like, 'Read this, read this!' Shoving it at me, you know, 'Come on, you must keep up!' (Laughs).

We need that reading list as well!

(Everyone laughs).

(Avryl) Yeah it's a great reading list and that's not all of them! Yeah.

What do you think erm, young people know of Greenham today or or even any people, not just young people. Do you think people are aware of Greenham?

(Avryl) No. Especially not young people. Erm, I'm a foster mum of teenage girls.

Oh wow, amazing.

(Avryl) After my own childhood I always said - because I met this foster family that was so lovely to me and I said one day I'm going to be a foster Mum. So I've been fostering for the last 10 years, teenage girls and they have very - well maybe it's because of the circumstances and situations that they're coming from but,

(Tembre) And being an island as well.

(Avryl) And being in Ireland as well. Yeah, they don't have much awareness of what's really going down. But by the time they leave me!

(Everyone laughs)

(Tembre) They're singing, they're writing poetry! (Laughs).

(Avryl) They're crocheting, because I'm mad crocheter. They're aware of the environment, they they're aware of,

(Tembre) Vegetarianism.

(Avryl) What's happening to the animals, the environment, their rights, their sexuality, you name it, they know. They've got more of a handle by the time they leave, and most of them keep in contact with me. Most of them are still in contact with me. And that's lovely. And that's the reward. You know, I mean, it's been very, very challenging at times. Very challenging, my goodness yeah.

But so rewarding. Why do you think it is then that that people don't know about Greenham?

(Avryl) Well to tell you the truth it's not just Greenham, they don't know about the Holocaust. There's even groups out there now saying it didn't even exist. I mean, you know, is it being taught out there in the schools? You know.

I mean the Holocaust very much is. Er it's very much on the school curriculum but - as, as is suffrage, you know, people learn about the Suffragettes and the Suffragists. Definitely the Suffragettes but not about Greenham.

(Avryl) But so is, supposed to be sexuality and about everything around sex education, and I get these girls coming to me, and they know nothing. They really do know, do not know anything. Yeah. It's shameful really.

Yeah. What do you think we need to do to change that, apart from just send all young women to your house?

(Everyone Laughs).

(Avryl) No!

(Everyone Laughs).

(Avryl) I just don't know. I just don't know.

(Tembre) Well, awareness, I think what you're doing awareness online is a big thing - isn't it? Social media, you know, I've been saying to people, you know, that I've been learning songs to do a Greenham or I'm reading my mum, my granny's poetry or you know, or I'm going to we're going to be interviewed, and they say, 'What for?' And then you say, oh this and then it's like, all right, yeah. And I think sometimes, you know, maybe people not too young, but maybe I'm 40 something so it's a bit younger than me, you know, they say, oh, they kind of remember, it's like planting a seed - they have a seed of the word Greenham Common or at least marches at that time and what women did and came together and what a difference they made. So there's like, a bit of a seed there that they suddenly go oh yeah, I remember something like that. But, you know, I think it's different when you're also in Ireland unfortunately. They have their own - we've had our own history here.

Yeah, of course.

(Tembre) And many women that have been amazing and that journey and so yeah, I think it's there it's just dormant sometimes. And it just takes that little bit of, bit of watering or feeding to actually be able to have a conversation about it. But social media I'd say and what you're doing in terms of doing these interviews and on your website and erm I think that's that's a good ...

(Avryl) We were shocked by the amount of numbers that were there it - wasn't there 30,000 around the base, and I'm so surprised with those figures and facts that it was six or seven miles long. I'd want to tell everybody - did you know that?

Yeah, nine miles, nine miles around the base.

(Avryl) I know! That was it, and then 50,000 at the at the walk. Because that included men as well. Oh my god, that is just, that that needs to be out there definitely.

Such a vast number and yet so many people don't know about it.

(Avryl) But where are women in history? A lot of them didn't even, couldn't even use their names. They had to use their husband's names. Where are the women in history? We we accidentally - this is so strange - but we both got each other a book for Christmas.

(Tembre) It is a bit strange but the subject,

(Avryl) I got you,

(Tembre)
I think it was like powerful women of the world and then I got you on about,

(Avryl)
Badass Women, I got you Badass Women.

(Tembre)
And I got you No Ordinary Women of Ireland.

(Avryl)
No Ordinary Women of Ireland, the Irish female activists you know so that was just strange that we both got them (laughs) at the same time, so yeah.

You obviously know each other very well. So not very, not strange but a wonderful thing, really wonderful thing. Shall we have another poem?

(Avryl) Yeah. 'The end.' She didn't mess about making fancy titles or anything.

No need.

(Tembre) And some of them didn't have titles, you had give them titles.

(Avryl) I had to have, to give them a title. Yeah. So I tried to keep it in keeping with the book. Yeah. 'The end.' 'What's the point of going on with the bombs over our heads? They have only to release one and millions will be dead. Are we so afraid to face this huge crisis, put it at the back of our minds don't matter where the dice is? As you feel and see and breathe this beautiful life, to blow it up and give up the strife to plod on not having a care, it's not going to happen, they would not dare. But I think it is beyond our reach, the powers that be are not listening to our speech. But are we going to just let it slide, give them enough rope? But then the whole planet will have died. So what are we going to do as we plod on with our living? Wait for the Big Bang and hope God is forgiving.'

Just so powerful that one. Yeah, it just feels so sad and mournful. But yet there's still that fight in there.

(Avryl) Yeah.

(Tembre) And you can tell it's like, it's like she's in the midst of that - isn't she? Because you know, it did make a difference made a huge difference of women gathering. But yeah, she wrote that when she was in that question, you know - is this making a difference? And is this the end? Or what's gonna happen? And yeah, you get a real sense of that.

Yeah, definitely. She mentioned - so you know there she mentions God at the end. And she mentions God and religion and Jesus in quite a lot of her poems.

(Avryl) I noticed that as well.

Was she religious?

(Avryl) You know, she wasn't at all. I mean, a lot of families that have alcoholism in the family very rarely do church. (Laughs). It seems to be a common factor that it's, you know, that's what I've read about anyway, that seems to be. So we were - the only time we went to church is when we want, we wanted to go to girl scouts. But to go to girls, girl scouts we had to go to the Sunday morning club or church. And that was the only time we ever went. (Laughs).

It's really interesting then that she she taps into that language, that language.

(Avryl) It really surprised me, I have to say,

(Tembre) I think she was always searching. I think she was never closed off to things. I think there was this search, you know she,

(Avryl) She was into Buddhism.

(Tembre) Yeah, she was wanting the knowledge or kind of asking for it or please help. You know, there was definitely a sense of there's something bigger there. And you know, and also maybe the language, maybe we find it quite loaded when we see that she mentions Jesus or God, but maybe in her day ...

Yeah.

(Tembre) ... you know it was just part of the language.

You're right.

(Tembre) Because my mum, my granny was quite yeah, quite wacky, in all the things that she believed in. She she saw UFOs she was absolutely convinced.

(Avryl) Oh yeah.

(Tembre) And she's written a lot of poems about them and aliens and in a peaceful way, not as a threatening way but as a bridging, and she had lots of really amazing dreams and experiences in her back garden of seeing UFOs and writing about it. And she, yes, she was quite wild.

(Avryl) Do you know what, she never even travelled anywhere. I've done a lot of travelling all over the world. My never went anywhere except Ireland, Guernsey and England. That's the only places she ever went. She never did anything.

And Scotland!

(Tembre) Oh, yeah. When she was a child.

(Avryl) Oh, yeah she yeah. Yeah.

(Tembre) She probably went to Wales or something like that, as well.

(Avryl) I don't recall her going to Wales.

(Tembre) And she came to Ireland and visited us. And that was, yeah.

(Avryl) She wanted to, she wanted to go to the pyramids and see the wonders of the world. She wanted to see all that and I wish I'd been able to take her.

She seems, she seems to be looking for, you know, a wider community, you know. Even with, you know, the things with aliens and things. She's she's searching constantly - isn't she?

(Avryl) She used to hang out with us, come partying with us, raving with us, whatever Mum was there.

(Avryl) Even if you didn't want her! (Laughs).

(Avryl) Even if we didn't want her! (Laughs). And all our friends were her friends, you know, but er she said she couldn't, she couldn't communicate with her peer group. She just didn't have anybody her age. She, she, they - she said their minds weren't open. You know. So that's why she hung out with all of us because, you know, she could relate and they'd understand her and stuff. That's why she loved Glastonbury and you know.

The things that, so things like the non-violent direct action that that women used at Greenham from Embrace the Base to you know, cutting through the fence, graffitiing on missiles and things like that. Do you see any of these kind of tactics used in protest today? Do you think, you know, any of this continues?

(Avryl) Well, we did have - I've been to a couple of protests down at Shannon airport. Because that's in Clare because of all the USA planes landing full of soldiers and who - god knows what else, you know on their way to a war or somewhere else in the world. And so there'd be protests down there that I've been a part of. And one that I didn't go to, there was a particular woman who ran the pirate radio in Galway - I can't remember her name - an elderly woman, and she got through the fence with a hammer, just to prove that, once again, where's the security? We can get through.

(Tembre) I think they were refuelling the plane.

(Avryl) They were refuelling in Shannon that's what was happening. And there was a huge, you know.

(Tembre) Even though they're meant to be a neutral country.

Yeah.

(Tembre) Yeah.

(Avryl) So that's, that's really all that's around that. But it was like, that reminded me of Greenham and stuff, you know. Yeah. There's not been nothing else. I can't think of anything else.

(Tembre) No, I suppose you weren't really part of big, big movements here or when you moved to Ireland, it was kind of in small, small ways. Small

communities of connecting, or support really more than anything that's what you've done.

(Avryl) Also Shannon airport brought a lot of the refugees here as well, when when the ...

(Tembre) Asylum seekers.

(Avryl) ... influx of refugees and asylum seekers and we you know, that - through my work and I'm working for this back, to back to education group for asylum seekers, and I met some amazing, amazing people, amazing families and everything that were settling here. My erm, my other daughter Malawi she's of mixed race, and erm she - we never saw black people here when, up to the age she was about 14. And then all the asylum seekers started coming. And she'd never had - well, a little bit of racism, but very little. And then once when we went over to England, there was racism. But it was when the refugees and asylum seekers came Malawi says her, her life changed. She, you know, she was getting pushed in the street and,

(Tembre) Things changed for her.

(Avryl) Things changed for her because she was one of them.

(Tembre) Even though she was born here, and yeah, yeah. So it's been a really,

(Avryl) So that's been a real eye opener, you know.

(Tembre) I suppose that might be what led some people to go to Greenham back in the day to, to find a community you know, you know, find somewhere where, from what I've heard, everyone was accepting of everyone.

Exactly. A safe place to be.

(Avryl) You just had to be female. Oh, but there was also men there. I remember meeting men there as well.

Yeah, there were some actions and and they were allowed there to run the creche and look after the kids.

(Everyone laughs).

(Tembre) And I, my mother in law, Wendy, she lives in Suffolk. She wouldn't have gone to anything like that but when I spoke to her yesterday on the phone and told her that we were being interviewed by you Vanessa she, she was I remember, I remember that being, you know, and she would have had a very contained,

(Avryl) She's in her 80s.

(Tembre) She's in her 80s now and her, her husband has passed away. But she, she had a sense of it, she knew I didn't have to say very much more. So through the media and whether it was talked about with her husband or family or anything, I think she, she had a sense of it er, she says, 'Oh please tell me how that goes. That's really... I want to talk. I want to hear more about that.' And that's amazing, as well.

Yeah, that's it even, you know, even now and at her age, you know, can be learning more and spreading the word definitely. What do you think today's activists can learn from Greenham women?

(Tembre) I think it's worth, worth gathering peacefully. And I think women, women together is always extremely powerful.

(Avryl) We can make the difference. I mean, look at that power that we had there. And we made the difference. We made things change. And it also gave us the confidence and the self esteem to carry on in our individual lives. You know, it made us feel yes, we can make the difference. So we would go back home and make those differences. You know, I'm looking at now, there's refuges for women everywhere because of domestic violence. And there's so much support out there now for women and children. You know, obviously we need more. We always need more. But erm yeah, it was, I think it was a good thing and I think it needs to be taught.

Yeah.

(Tembre) I do get concerned slightly for you know what's happening in the world right now with the pandemic and the lockdown and how, you know, people have been really losing their freedom and their freedom to move and choice. And the vaccinations. And I do get concerned about that. And, you know, I wonder where the young people are in terms of standing up for their freedom, as much as having respect for keeping, keeping people safe, but being able to, you know - even just their education, you know, I've got an older daughter who's 20, who's in her second year in college and she hasn't been present in college for the past year and I and I said, 'Well, are you going to stand up? Are you going to do something about this?' And I think it's hard. I think it really is hard for this generation. Some people have it in them and er, so I think it's it's a challenge but it's really is worth standing up for yourself.

Yeah, sure.

(Avryl) We've always taken the road less travelled.

(Tembre) I think it gets harder though at times.

Is there anything else that you'd like to tell us about or that I've not asked you about that you want to mention?

(Tembre) Erm, I wrote a little melody that I'd love to sing you, to one of Marlene's poems. It's a really simple one. It was erm, she she wrote this. I'll read it to you. And it's called 'I will walk with my hand in yours'. 'I will walk with my feet on the earth so sweet. I will walk with my hands in yours. For the time is right for us to unite. I will walk with my hands in yours. I will walk with my heart open wide from the start I will walk with my hand in yours. For the time is right for us to rise. I will walk with my hand in yours. Grateful my hand in yours.' And I just did a really simple melody one time when I was near the sea recently thinking about Marlene, I was by myself. And it's very simple, but it's in the middle of being you know being grown right now with harmonies but it goes **(Singing) 'I will walk with my hands in yours. I will walk with my hands in yours. I will walk with my hands in yours. I will walk with my hands in yours.'**

Beautiful! Thank you so much for sharing that.

(Tembre) My pleasure.

I feel like we could talk for hours! Yeah, thank you so much for talking to me today and for sharing so much about Marlene. What an honour for you to have had her in your lives. She's sounds like the most amazing woman.

(Avryl) I'm thanking her for leaving us this.

Yeah. Yeah.

(Avryl) It's just beautiful.

Thank you Marlene. Yeah, thank you.

(Avryl) Thank you so much Vanessa for putting this together.

My pleasure. It's been an absolute pleasure to meet you both and look forward to seeing you again soon. Take care.

(Tembre) Take care.

(Avryl) Thank you. Bye.