

Transcript of 83-year-old Mr. Brian Shaw of Kent in conversation with  
Dr. John Goodyear (University of Birmingham / Kulturgenossenschaft Globe e.G.) on  
Saturday 19 January 2019, 2:00pm (GMT)

Second Part of Conversation: Forces Entertainment

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A: Interviewer Dr. John Goodyear (38, DOB: 06.09.1980)

B: Kino patron Mr. Brian Shaw (83, DOB: 24.10.1935)

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A: Hello, and a very warm welcome from me here, John Goodyear, in the county of Kent, known as the Garden of England. I am joined here today by Brian Shaw. Hello, Brian.

B: Hello, there.

A: Er, Brian, we are just going to talk a little bit about erm the cinema and cinema life, erm, in Oldenburg. Could you just describe to us, as you just did a few moments ago, the journey that you would have had to have taken to get from the Donnerschwee barracks to that cinema and some of the contentions in place?

B: Yes, yes, it was a bit of an obstacle course to be honest. And I must point out that the cinema was very important to us because there was no television; it was our only form of entertainment, so it was very vital to us. **But**, we used to have to walk from the barracks a considerable distance to the town centre, across the town, which—hopefully—there was a level crossing, which was often closed because of trains, etcetera ..., so we had to err hope that we would get to the cinema before the show started and if the crossing was OK, that would be, we would be straight sailing until we come to the canal, which had a lift bridge on it, which was often – er, er out of op, op, op, of operation – with err small canal barges floating underneath of it, so that was a double erm problem getting to the cinema before the performance started. Erm, it was quite a long journey to the cinema because it was virtually the other side of the town, so I can understand why there was an ambition to build a cinema closer to the barracks.

A: The, erm, the journey itself, how would you take this journey: would this be a journey by vehicle?

B: No, we would do it basically on foot. There was a bus provided by the regiment, but it only run at certain times, and at certain particular times of the day, which probably not necessarily erm, in, erm, coincided with the cinema entertainment, but it was quite a long journey, and in the winter could be quite a cold journey, erm, as I say, the town is quite a reasonably large town; it is not a small village. And, but by the time you got there—crossed over crossing and God knows what—erm, it was difficult to be able to say: “OK, we’ll be there at the beginning of the show.” There was always a lapse, one way or the another.

A: And, when you got there, how did you pay for your tickets?

B: Er, we paid for the tickets in a military err type of bank note, well, bank note, it was an army note called BAFFS, B-A-Double F- S. These were anything from

a penny up to one-pound. They was, they were given to us on our pay day. We had an option of buying German marks, but anything British, like the cinema, er, could only be paid for in these so-called BAFFS.

A: And once you paid for these erm tickets, presumably in the foyer, erm, first who would actually be selling them?

B: Err, well, they [*refers here to the BAFFS and not the cinema tickets*] weren't sold so much; they were part of our, our, er weekly wages. We would have to attend a erm wage parade, and march up in front of an officer, who would have a piece of paper and a notebook and a list how much you would earn in one week. And then you was given the opportunity of taking marks, German marks, or you could take the BAFFS, but the BAFFS were more important to us because they bought our rations in the NAAFI [*Navy, Army and Air Force Institute*], which were most important to us, like cigarettes, beer and err evening meal and err various err toothpaste, toothbrushes, boot polish, etcetera, etcetera. Hmhm.

A: Erm, when you got into the cinema, you paid [*later correct to: your cinema ticket in*] for your BAAFS. What sort of shows were been put on, Brian, can you remember?

B: Usually, similar to what we would be expected to view in England: you, as I say, usually, err, err a short film at the beginning, a news reel in the middle, and a main feature film at the end of it.

A: What sort of films can you remember watching there?

B: Well, 'course, they would most be black-and-white, but there was ordinary dramas mostly. Erm, erm, most of the big shows, which were coming out at the time, the American shows, erm, musical shows, they, they didn't really come into vogue until erm, we moved, I moved to Delmenhorst where we had a small type of cinema there. And a lot of the big shows, like *Guys and Dolls*, and things like this, were just coming out, and they were, 'course, there was a new type of entertainment.

A: What do you think the function err was for yourselves, for the British Army, to put films on for the soldiers?

B: Well, we was away from our country; we was in a country which didn't speak English; and it was our form of entertainment. And it was to keep morale up basically.

A: Brian, thank you very much.

B: Thank you.

Photographic material from Brian Shaw

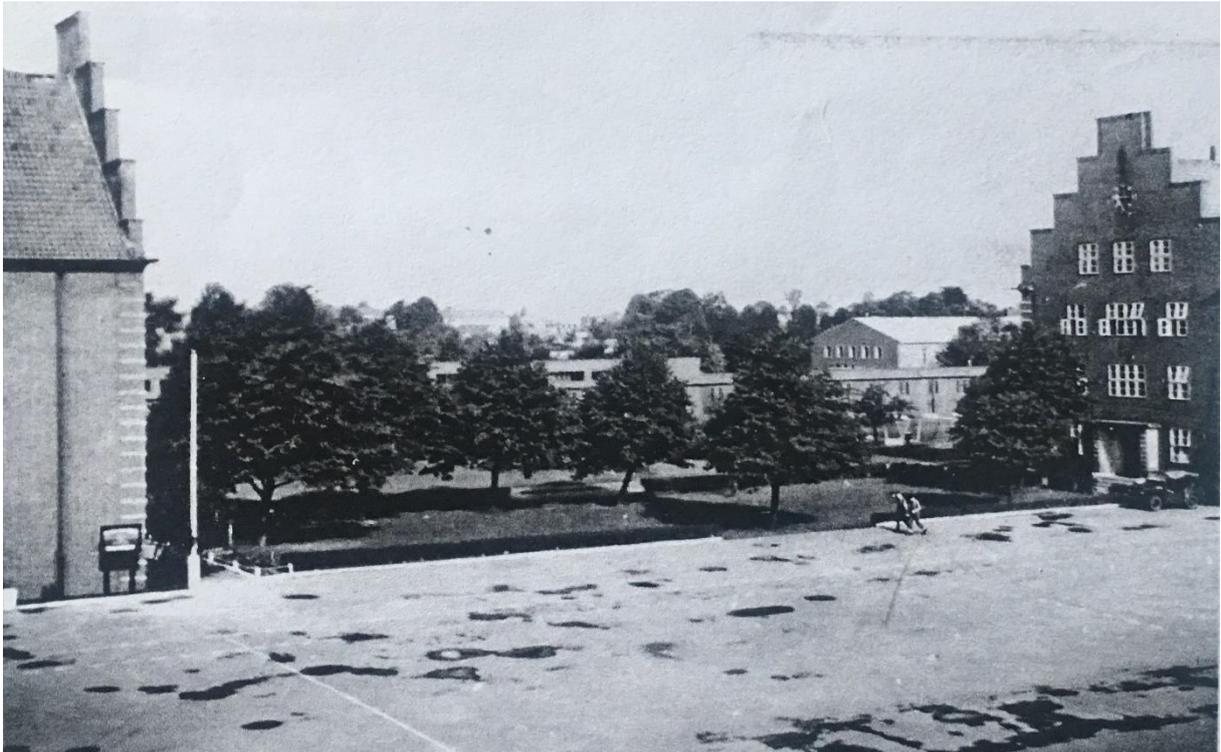


Fig. 1. Picture sent to Brian Shaw of the Donnerschwee site with what appears to be the newly built Globe cinema within its five upper windows in the background on the right-hand side.

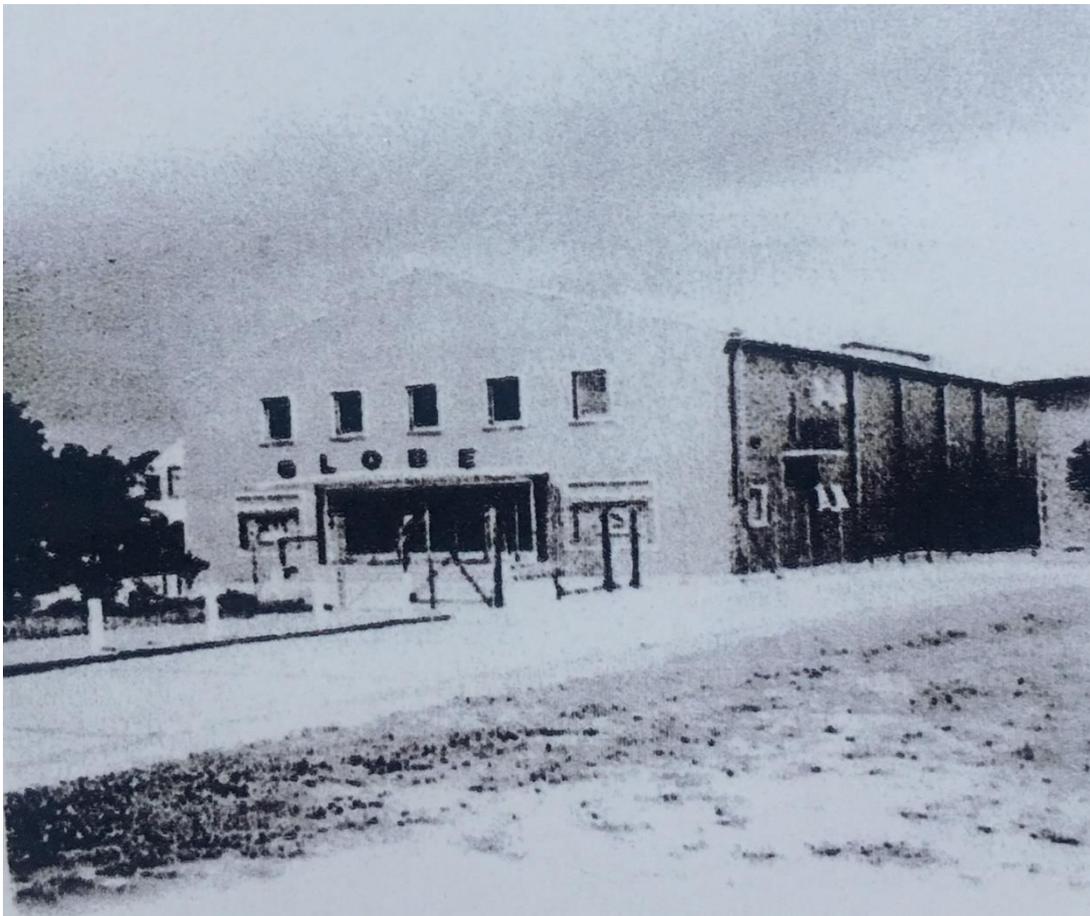


Fig. 2. Picture sent to Brian Shaw of the Globe Cinema on the Donnerschwee site in Oldenburg, probably one of the oldest images of the Globe, taken in wintertime with the snow-covered ground.



Fig. 3. 83-year-old Brian Shaw in his front garden in Kent