

Transcript of 87-year-old Mr. Ron Humphreys of Cheshire in conversation with
Dr. John Goodyear (University of Birmingham / Kulturgenossenschaft Globe e.G.) on
Wednesday 16 January 2019, 5:00pm (GMT)

A: Interviewer Dr. John Goodyear (38, DOB: 06.09.1980)
B: Globe patron Mr. Ron Humphreys (87, DOB: 07.10.1931)

A: Hello! My name's John Goodyear and I am here today in the county of Cheshire with Ron Humphreys. Hello Ron!

B: Hello! How are you?

A: I am fine, thank you, Ron. How are you?

B: Yes, not too good today actually. Err, I lost my voice this morning, so I am a bit croaky.

A: Ron, could you tell me how old you are?

B: I am 87, going on 88.

A: And when were you born? When's your birthday?

B: The seventh of October Nineteen-Thirty-One (1931)

A: And where were you born?

B: I was born in Hale Barns, just about three miles from here.

A: Thank you.
Ron, could you tell us a little bit about your National Service: where you were trained and where you went?

B: Yes, well, when I joined the Service, I was taken from this country: to Aldershot and did our basic training at Aldershot, as everybody did. Whilst at Aldershot, I had an illness because all of us had an injection for T.A.B., which were put us in hospital, in Cambridge Hospital, so I missed the passing out parade. After that I was sent to the Dental Centre at Blackdown. When we were posted, I went to Oldenburg in Germany.

A: What were your first impressions of Oldenburg?

B: Yes. Well, it was quite built-up. Err, there was no dam..., bom, bomb, bomb there was no bomb damage, which I thought there would be, so was pleasantly surprised. And the place I was stopping [*.. excuse me*]. It's OK. The place was the Dental Centre, was very pleasant, was by a large lake and across the lake was the place where we used to go for lunch, dinner, tea, whatever. And when I went to the first one, err, who should I see, but a friend of mine from Timperley, who was the cook there, so that was a pleasant surprise. And he used to surprise us sometimes with ... bringing us treats, and bacon and egg pie. My friend ... [*laughter*]

A: Ron, talk a little bit about where you worked and what you did in Oldenburg?

B: Yes, well, the other side of this lake, [*acoustic interference*] as I was saying, there were places where you could, erm, the boat house and they had canoes and paddle things, pedalos. We did that if it were a nice day. We used to do that..., it had some other things because I used to be, at that time, very keen on photographs, taking photos, and take those. Err, I also had, had, was doing some marquetry work, which I did. Erm, there was only two of us on the upstairs because there wasn't many, [*acoustic interference*] wasn't many other people in the building, which was a mixed sort of building, [*acoustic interference*] and that. And then we could go for a walk around the park, things like that. It wasn't very exciting really, but it was very nice.

A: Ron, you said in your conversations with me that you went to a cinema. Yes. Could you tell me a little bit about the cinema you went to and what you saw there?

B: Right, the cinema was quite a way from where I was at Churchill House in Oldenburg, which was the name of the house, well, it was a big house with about seven or eight different places in it: offices. And, so, we only went occasionally, Taffy, and the man in the next place erm ... when we went. I remember when we went, we saw *Carmen Jones*, which was a musical sort of thing and probably saw one or two other things. But they were at the barracks and that was a good while away.

A: Ron, how did you pay for the tickets to go to the cinema?

B: Paid when you go when you said you were going. You didn't make an appointment. You just arrived and paid on the spot sort of thing.

A: Can you remember, Ron, whether many people went to the cinema or were you just sort of there with a few others?

B: Err, well, I was on my own really. I, I just, I didn't have contact with the other people in the barracks because there was ... from a different place really, there was Hmm.

A: And on that day when you saw *Carmen Jones*, can you remember whether the room, was it full with people or were there not so many people?

B: No, there wasn't many people there. There wasn't many people there? It wasn't popular. [*laughter*].

A: So that day wasn't so popular?

B: No, it wasn't a thriller. It was a musical. OK.

A: Erm, Ron, let's talk a little bit about the end of your time in Oldenburg! Yes. Erm, how did you wind down your time in Oldenburg before coming back to the UK?

B: Erm, well, we had to ... sort of, sort everything out, put everything in order. Put all the ..., check em on the medical things that we had there. We had a revolver in the safe, and, which, you know, if someone had rushed in ... the dental officer had the key to the safe, so it was useless really. That's all we did really. Haha. Wasn't lot of things to do there. OK.

A: And how do you feel about your National Service time? Do you look back at this time with great happiness, Ron? Was this a nice time for you or perhaps was this just a waste of time?

- B: Oh no, no, I was very glad I did it. When we first started to go in 1954, you know, you didn't want to go, take you away from your mother, [*imitates crying*] and this time I'm glad I had it. And, it was very exciting, yeah.
- A: So, when did you arrive in Oldenburg and when did you leave and how long were you there for, Ron, can you work this out?
- B: Yes, just before Christmas 55, I suppose, and I'd left [*acoustic interference*] just before Christmas in 1956.
- [*acoustic interference with the recording*]
- A: OK. So, in total, around about twelve months.
- B: Yes, about that.
- A: Ron, you read the article in the Daily Telegraph about the Globe. Yes. What do you think about this story about rescuing the cinema and bringing it back to life?
- B: Yes, I think it is a very good idea. Although I didn't do it myself a lot, but I think, you know, I like doing local things and as you will probably see we have got a load of stuff in this house. My wife says there is too much stuff. [*laughter*] We have got a cuckoo clock on the wall there. OK, so you have cuckoo clock in the room here in which ... that's the same cuckoo clock [*laughter*]
- A: So, in the room in which I am speaking with Ron—this is his living room—we've got a cuckoo clock from, Ron?
- B: That is somewhere on the Lange Straße, and somewhere from one of the shops there that sells basically cuckoo clocks and knickknacks. It still cuckoos, although it is a bit croaky like me, but it still [*laughter*]
- A: So, we have a cuckoo clock from Oldenburg. What other items do you have from Oldenburg, Ron?
- B: Erm, so, let me think. I have got this boar. That was carved by a lady, erm sorry, a gentlemen in the Black Forest, who was the father of a lady who was as a nurse in our dental centre. Marlise, and she gave me that when I left.
- A: And what we will do is we'll include a picture of the cuckoo clock and also the boar in the transcript to this interview [*see below: Fig. 8 and 9*]. Let me thank you very much for your time.
- B: Yes, thank you. Pleased to do it. Thank you.



Fig. 1. Photo of Ron Humphreys of the Royal Army Dental Corps (R.A.D.C.) in his office at the Dental Centre in Churchill House, Ratsherr-Schulze-Str. 10, 26122 Oldenburg



Fig. 2. Photo of Churchill House, Ratsherr-Schulze-Str. 10, 26122 Oldenburg, housing the Station Staff Office, the Court Martial Centre, Signal Office, No II PCLU, Army Post Office, 716 Army Dental Centre, 93 F.S.S., National Council of World Churches, HQ 89, Sect. S18, Catholic Relief Service (NCWC)

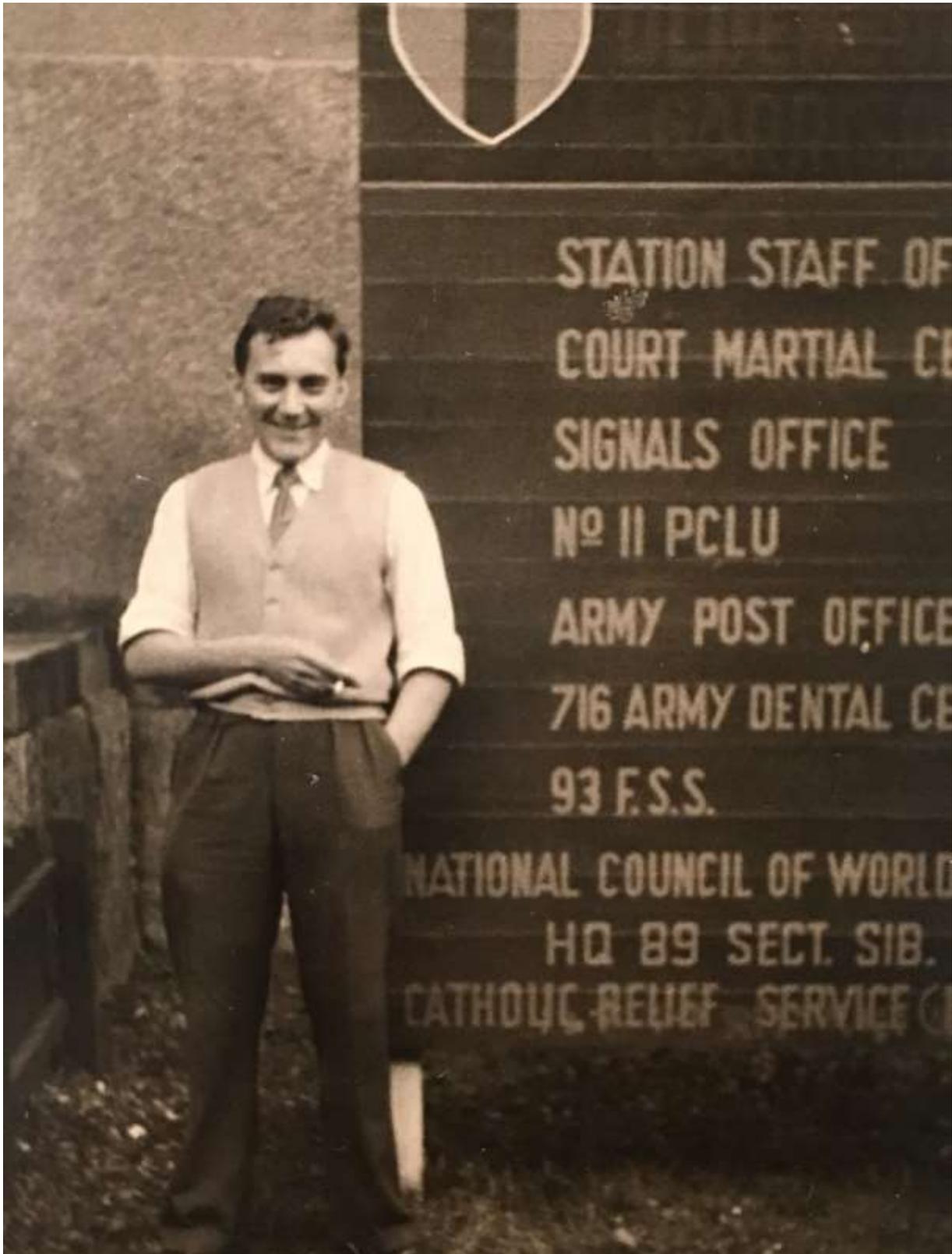


Fig. 3. Photo of Ron Humphreys dressed "in civvies" in front of sign outside of Churchill House, Ratsherr-Schulze-Str. 10, 26122 Oldenburg



Fig. 4. Staff at 716 Army Dental Centre in Oldenburg. From left to right, named as Mike, Wally and Marlise



Fig. 5. Army Dental Corp vehicle with German driver, Herr Wilts (possibly: Wiltz or Wilts). The car could be hired by staff for recreational use. Ron later said Herr Wilts was at a prison camp at Dunham (about four miles from where Ron currently lives) during the war, presumably as a POW.



Fig. 6. Frequented by many BOAR soldiers, *Foto Kniep* in Oldenburg proved popular for a place to buy cameras



Fig. 7. Photo of 87-year-old Ron Humphreys with a German camera bought in Oldenburg



Fig. 8. Cuckoo clock, as mentioned, during the interview



Fig. 9. Carving out of wood presented to Ron Humphreys on leaving Oldenburg by fellow colleague, Marlise, made by her father in the Black Forest