

**Balsall Heath Local  
History Society Gazette**

**JULY 2024**



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History Society and  
lostchildrenproject**

**Membership of the Society  
costs £12 a year. Membership  
runs from January to  
December each year and  
application forms are available  
on the website. Fees at  
meetings are: £1 for members  
and £3 for visitors.**

**Meetings are held at St Paul's  
Venture, Malvern Street at 7:30  
pm. Refreshments will be  
served from 7 p.m to 7:15 p.m.**

**Coming soon**

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September 7pm  
for 7.30pm Paul Jaques on  
Warwickshire & B'ham Home  
Guard**

**Balsall Heath History Exhibition  
Friday Sept 6<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, Sept 8<sup>th</sup>  
11 a.m to 4.30 p.m**

**Book Launch**

**with an illustrated talk by Val Hart**

**Saturday, Sept 7<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m.**

“Balsall Heath, a History”, by Val Hart, was first published in 1992. It had many reprintings but has been out of print for some time. This is a revised and updated edition.

**At The Old Print Works,**

**498-506 Moseley Road, B12 9AH**

**Monica Dyer's Funeral**

This was held on Friday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> at Lodge Hill Crematorium and was attended by about 60 people. We were all asked to bring a single flower and these were added to the sides of the coffin which then looked absolutely wonderful, a fitting tribute to a woman of great originality and courage.

*To access a webcast of the funeral, this link will be available for 28 days*

*[https:// www.anaturalundertaking.co.uk](https://www.anaturalundertaking.co.uk) (search Monica Dyer)*

Donations to “Justice” or “Amnesty International” of which Monica was a supporter throughout her adult life.



## Charles Reginald Enock. Engineer, Explorer and Author 1868 to 1970



This remarkable man was born in the Balsall Heath area to parents, Arthur and Lavinia, one of eight children. They lived at 13 Balsall Heath Road, the far side of the River Rea, so actually in Edgbaston,. His father was Manager to a Brazil Merchant so there was a family connection to South America. Charles was baptised at St Luke's Church in 1869. In 1871 the family moved to a house on the Pershore Road and more moves followed. From 1879 to 1883 he lived in Moseley

In 1889 at the age of 21 he was articled to William Hale, Civil Engineer, and from 1891 to 1900 he spent 3 years in America on railroad construction. This was followed by six years working in Mexico on water supplies, hydraulic works and mining.

His extensive subsequent travels, undertaken for work purposes, led to the publication of over 30 books. His first book published in 1907 was entitled, "The Andes and the Amazon. Life and Travel in Peru." This book was bought recently by someone living in Balsall Heath who kindly drew our attention to this man and lent us the book. It is utterly amazing, with detailed descriptions of his solo journeys to remote parts of Peru, and illustrated with 58 images which are either photographs or his own drawings.



He was fascinated by Peru, making full acknowledgement of its difficult past. He said, "Peru is a country of large things It has one of the great mountain ranges in the world- the Andes. It has the longest river system- The Amazon- and the most extensive forests. Its mineral deposits are the largest in the world."



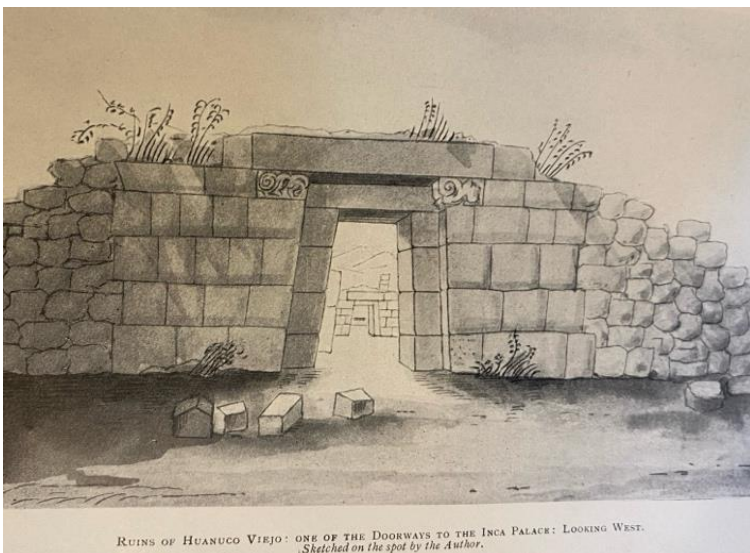
THE AUTHOR: TRAVEL IN THE SNOWY ANDES.



SHEPHERD'S COTTAGE IN THE ANDES.  
*Sketched on the spot by the Author.*

It was, of course, the minerals and especially gold, which were the cause of his explorations, but it is astonishing to find that he mainly travelled alone, recruiting local people and mules to accompany him on perilous journeys often at very high altitude. On one occasion he says casually that he was at 17,000 feet when his hat blew off.

Accommodation was chiefly provided by his tent and there were frequent situations where the food or water supplies ran out. He travelled on foot to places never before visited by man, with immense energy and commitment.



RUINS OF HUANUCO VIEJO: ONE OF THE DOORWAYS TO THE INCA PALACE: LOOKING WEST.  
*Sketched on the spot by the Author.*

Inca ruins were seen by Enoch in many places in Peru.

As a mining engineer he was particularly interested as the Incas and then the Spaniards, who undertook extensive mining for gold, often at high altitudes.



THE MONTAÑA: CANNIBALS OF THE PACHITEA RIVER.

However, he was equally interested in the Peruvian people and is constantly aware of how much the indigenous tribes suffered at the hands of the Spanish. His most vehement criticism, though, is reserved for the gatherers of India Rubber in the forests to the west of the Andes. Here at that time there were about 70 different tribes- up to 150,00 people , relatively untouched by civilisation but viciously oppressed and enslaved.

Enock made many more expeditions, and gave lectures to the Royal Geographic Society. of which he was a member. He died in 1970, aged 101, an extraordinary man of great achievements.

### Val Hart

Should you wish to read some of his books, a few are available to read online or download from Project Gutenberg at <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/9627>

## JOHN SMITH – RADIO MEMORIES June 27<sup>th</sup> 2024

At our last meeting on June 27<sup>th</sup> 2024, we had another interesting talk. This talk was given by John Smith and was entitled 'Radio Memories'. Unlike other talks this was an audio experience rather than a visual experience. The turnout for this meeting was lower than usual, but those who were there were transported back to their younger days on hearing the radio theme tunes and clips from years gone by.

John started his talk by describing it as a 'Nostalgic Wallow'.

The BBC public service started on November 14<sup>th</sup> 1922.

John explained how pieces of music used as theme tunes became extremely popular with the general public. An example of this was when The Knightsbridge March, which was played to us, was used as the theme tune to a programme called 'In Town Tonight'. 100,000 copies of this

music were purchased. The programme stopped in 1937, but following complaints from the listeners, it was reinstated and continued until 1960.

Most people are familiar with Charles Penrose singing The Laughing Policeman, but John played another of his songs, which isn't so well known – 'The Laughing Bachelor'

A long-lasting radio programme is Desert Island Discs, which started in 1942 with Roy Plomley as the presenter. Several versions of the theme tune 'The Sleepy Lagoon' have been used and we heard one of the lesser-known versions of the tune. The first participant was Vic Oliver and many celebrities have participated over the years.



We were reminded of many favourite programmes – Ray's a Laugh, Educating Archie and Two Way Family Favourites for instance. The Billy Cotton Bandshow began in 1948 and continued until 1968 with regular performances from stars, such as Russ Conway and Alma Cogan.

We heard an excerpt from the 1949 Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, when the commentator was clearly overexcited. We heard some advice about digestion given by Charles Hill, who was on a Monday night programme at 7pm. We heard an excerpt from the Hinge and Bracket programme followed by the memorable Dick Barton theme tune 'The Devil's Gallop' by Charles Williams.

Tommy Handley was another well known radio personality. He is remembered for the wartime programme ITMA. His popularity was apparent when 10,000 mourners were present at his funeral.

The BBC Charter does not allow advertising. In 1933 Radio Luxembourg commenced broadcasting and they were allowed to advertise. We heard one of the most recognisable advertising songs from that time 'We are the Ovaltineys'. Many of the future BBC disc jockeys trained at Radio Luxembourg. Another popular radio station, particularly amongst teenagers was Radio Caroline, which broadcast from a ship moored off the coast, commencing in 1964. In 1967, to cater for a younger audience, Radio 1 began.



We were reminded of many other favourite radio programmes:-

Semprini Serenades, which ran from 1957 for 25 years

Much Binding in the Marsh, written by Kenneth Horne and Richard Murdoch.

Take it from Here with Jimmy Edwards, Dick Bentley & Joy Nichols. It was written by the then young writers, Frank Muir and Denis Norden. One segment of this show was 'The Glums', which later became a television programme.

The Navy Lark, which had a very lively theme tune and ran from 1959 to 1977.

Bandwagon starring Arthur Askey, Richard Murdoch, Syd Walker and Diana Clare ran from 1938 to 1940.



The Goon Show ran from 1951 to 1960. It was written by Spike Milligan and starred Spike Milligan, Harry Secombe, Peter Sellers and Michael Bentine. It was reputedly a favourite of the then Prince Charles.

We heard Harry Secombe's wonderful rendition of 'We'll Keep a Welcome in the Hillside'.

A major part of broadcasting is news coverage. One of the most memorable BBC

news broadcasters was Richard Dimbleby. We heard a clip of his report of the D-Day landings in 1944.

Throughout the talk, there was much foot tapping and some humming along with the music. It was indeed a trip down memory lane.

JH

## Other Events

Birmingham Heritage Week runs from 6<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> of September and has now listed this year's events.

- In Balsall Heath, the details of the new Book Launch are already on page 1.
- There are also Dramatic History Trails on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> , and a new Exhibition from 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> .
- Brandwood End Cemetery, the story of its civilian remembrance garden on 14<sup>th</sup>
- .There is a history and discussion on the past and future of the Golden Lion in Cannon Hill Park on 6<sup>th</sup>
- . The Back to Backs has an open evening on 7<sup>th</sup>
- . For those that missed last year's tour, The Exchange on Broad St. tours on 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Other local attractions will open for free including Moseley Dovecote,
- Park, and Ice-house and Sarehole Mill.

All of those listed here are for free but some will need booking. Other events may charge money. It's a good idea to look at the listings for yourself early as there are many I haven't mentioned some events will probably be booked up early. For details see

<https://birminghamheritageweek.co.uk/>

The Balsall Heath Local History Society is Registered Charity No. 1101945  
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