

Obituary

Mrs Dorothy Irving-Bell (née Russell Gregg), best known to her wide circle of Antarctic friends as 'Squibbs', died in Bristol on 16 January 1987, aged 90. She was born on 9 July 1896 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and educated in England at Badminton School, Bristol. While there she was taken to hear Sir Ernest Shackleton lecture on his *Nimrod* expedition of 1907–09, an experience which, as she herself put it, 'infected me Antarctically'. Subsequently she was to listen spell-bound to Amundsen giving a public lecture and to subscribe her humble postal orders to both Scott's *Terra Nova* and Shackleton's *Endurance* expeditions. After World War I, in which she served as a VAD nurse, Squibbs took practical steps to acquaint herself with the practical side of polar exploration. In 1921, armed with her famous Brownie camera she presented herself on board Shackleton's *Quest* shortly before the expedition's departure for South Georgia, and by her winsome enthusiasm succeeded in gaining the affection of the crew. From this visit sprang her life-long friendship with James ('Scout') Marr and Cdr Frank Worsley.

Marriage in 1928 to Dr Ronald Irving-Bell in no way lessened her almost fanatical devotion to polar matters. In particular she developed a love of polar books, strengthened perhaps by her friendships with the historians Hugh Robert Mill and Gordon Hayes. In 1930 she ran a bookstall at the British Polar Exhibition in London. In 1934 she collected a library for the members of the British Graham Land Expedition, corresponding regularly with John Rymill and many of the young scientists. Squibbs' great mission in life was to imbue the young with a love of polar exploration. In 1937 she put this concept into practice by building up a splendid library for the Sea Scouts when they took over *Discovery*. After World War II, in which she served once again as a nurse, came an opportunity to help the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition. By her unaided efforts she cajoled books on all subjects from authors and publishers, packing and finally despatching to the expedition ship a library of some 400 items. Her reward was not just the joy of accomplishing a worthwhile task, but in the many and lasting friendships made with members of the expedition and others.