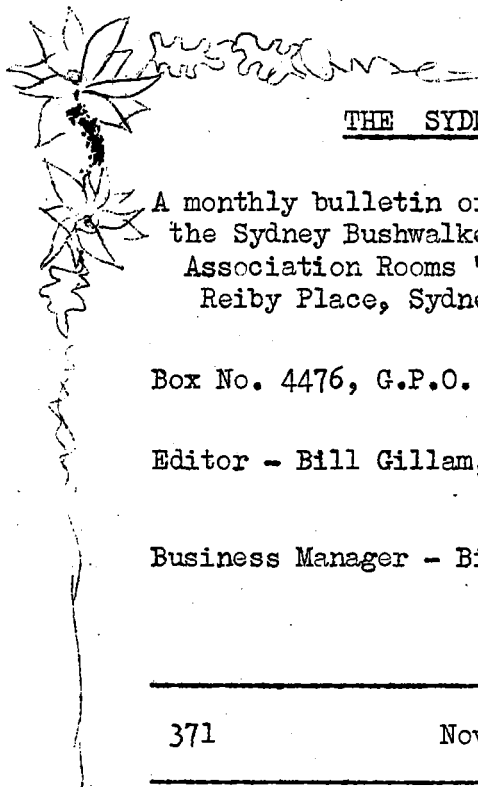


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THE SYDNEY BUSHWALKER

A monthly bulletin of matters of interest to
the Sydney Bushwalker, The N.S.W. Nurses'
Association Rooms "Northcote Building,"
Reiby Place, Sydney.

Box No. 4476, G.P.O. Sydney. 'Phone 843985.

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November, 1965

Price 1/-

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DON'T FORGET THE CHRISTMAS PARTY



AT OUR OCTOBER MEETING.

A. Colley.

The meeting opened with apologies from Jack Wren (who did turn up later) and Ron Knightley, and welcomes into the Club, along with good wishes and copies of the Constitution for new members Phil Butt, Ruth Constable, Barbara Evans and John Shepherd.

Following a brief report on our annual re-union, Frank Ashdown expressed his appreciation, which was heartily supported, of Betty Farquhar's work in organising the children's camp fire entertainment. The reunion appeared to have been a financial as well as a social success as our bank Balance rose by £23/2/11 to £311/13/5 during the month.

Although September with its unseasonal heat and fires was not the good walking month it usually is, Bob Godfrey in his walks report described several well attended walks. In fact too many turned up on Bob Smith's rock climbing instructional. John White took a party of eight on his Moruya walk, and, despite drought and bushfires reported that Burra Creek was very interesting. David Ingram led 16 members 4 prospectives and 6 visitors to Topham Trig and the Basin on Fathers Day. He reported that the wild flowers were very good, though they might have been even better a fortnight later. He also reported a permanent fire ban on West Head Peninsula. Jim Callaway's walk from Governor Game Lookout to Audley was attended by 2 members, 3 prospectives and 4 visitors. On September 24-26 Bill O'Neill led 9 members 4 prospectives and a visitor from Cambewarra to Kiama over the Barren grounds. There were bush fires and a lot of smoke, (was the fauna reserve burnt out? we wonder). Margaret Child had 26 starters on her Bundeena Audley walk, but this did not prevent Esme Biddulph from attracting another 16 to French's Forest on the same day. Perhaps the club is big enough to support more separate walks for those who live in the North and the South.

Margaret Child's Parks and Playgrounds Movement report described the Movement's continuous fight against misuse of Park lands. This time it was the use of Moore Park for car parking. The Movement is also trying to persuade the Minister for Lands to establish a 66 acre native Botanical garden at La Perouse and is advocating heavier penalties for rubbish dumping, gravel stealing and disposal of old cars in National Park.

It was decided to let Mick and Evelyn Elphick, John White and David Brown represent us at the coming nature conservation conference.

John White told us that the Tracks and Access Committee had found that the Florabella Pass at Warrimoo was not open as advertised. The Blue

Mountains National Park Trust had been asked to place signposts near the hotel site in Megalong, showing the way to Nellies Glen and the Devil's Hole. A track had been cleared from Mobbs Swamp to Merri-Merrigal.

Alan Rigby drew our attention to an article in "Life" magazine entitled "Kangaroo Good-bye" which contained the observation that "Australians are engaged on an all out war on everything furred, feathered or that moves."

The President announced that N.P.A. Christmas cards were now available and David Ingram undertook to sell them.

When the President, at the end of the meeting, called for room stewards, David Ingram said it would be better not to waste the meeting's time. John White and he would carry on as before. The meeting closed at 8.50 p.m.

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(7) A CLIMBER IN THE FRENCH ALPS

- Ron Cox

Grenoble.

October.

Dear Everybody,

Things have been pretty quiet over the past month. I'm fairly disgusted with myself, really; I've not at all made the most of my opportunities this summer, having been climbing on average only once every three week-ends. Main troubles are lack of steady partner, transport, and above all a certain lack of push presumably caused by advancing old age. I shall have to try to make more of the coming winter. I had hoped to be able to dominate long climbs of D so that I could start on TD, such as the North Face of the Dru, next year, but in fact I'm a long way from that still.

Early in September Fred Mitchell turned up again in Grenoble and we had a pleasant Sunday's bushwalking type activity in the nearby Belledonne Range, being too lazy to go climbing. The Belledonnes are quite pretty, if unexciting. The summits go to about 9,000 feet, but in summer they're quite bare of snow. In fact, the summits are bare of anything, peaks which looked quite impressive in winter being revealed as heaps of scree. However, at the intermediate levels between the uninspiring summits and the heavy pine forests of the lower slopes, there is open, very beautiful country of grass and rock, lakes and creeks with the aforementioned peaks rising behind. It is very much like Tasmania only there is no scrub and the access is such that you can get to most places on a Sunday. Even in these low ranges there are refuges scattered about everywhere, usually manned by a guardian, who will serve you with a meal - at a price. Fred and I had a very lazy day in the range - didn't even bother to climb any summits. Fred stayed in Grenoble only for a couple of days then left hoping to see a bit of Spain before returning eastward for the Munich October beer festival. After that he is going to England to work - apparently his funds are running down a bit. He's had a pretty good run, having travelled mostly by hitchhiking from Italy to Austria (1 month's skiing), Germany; Innsbruck to Chamonix on foot, France briefly, England and Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Leningrad, Moscow, Warsaw (of course you don't hitch-hike behind the Iron Curtain), back to the Alps for two months' climbing at Chamonix and Zermatt, leaving Zermatt just before this recent visit to me. Often I feel I may have made an error in coming to a steady situation here; Fred has seen infinitely more than I have, and of course done much more climbing than I have been able to do in week-ends. At Chamonix he and Bob "Strawberry" Jones did l'M, Charmoz, Grepon, traversed Miages-Bionnassay-Mont Blanc, at the end of which they were stuck in the Vallot hut for three days, - later the Midi-Plan traverse, the Petit-Dru-Grand-Dru traverse in almost the guide-book time, the Aiguille Blanche-Peutery Ridge route onto Mont Blanc, the Dent du Geant. That's quite a good July's climbing.

Last week-end I decided to risk going out with the local GUMS (Groupe Universitaire de Montagne et Ski), despite the fact that every time I go out with them the weather is bad. We went into the High Oisans, the country which contains several peaks just at the 4,000 m mark, notably the Meije and the Ecrins some 40 miles east of Grenoble. We went up to a refuge near the foot of the Meije late Saturday afternoon, an easy $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours walk. Objective was the

"Difficile" graded W Ridge of the Pic Nord des Cavales, a small 3360 m peak which gives a grandstand view onto the immense South Wall of the Meije. There was no grandstand view for us that day; when we gained the foot of the ridge at 7 a.m. Sunday the weather was looking miserable and no one seemed to want to take it on. So we decided to try to make a small, new variant on the ordinary route of the Peak. The rain arrived some time later just as I was clinging on to small, slightly rotten holds, trying to raise the courage to take on a 20 ft. layback, not feeling at all happy about the ability of my French belayer, some distance below, to do the right thing if things went wrong. The rain really was a good face-saver; we all beat a strategic retreat, getting back to Grenoble at 3 p.m.

You people back home in Australia are lucky that you don't have to be troubled by grades and standards and, above all, times. It would be nice to be able to climb in the leisurely Australian fashion once again, starting late, etc.

November.

Skiing has started properly, the climate rushes towards full winter. For weeks Grenoble has been submerged in fog, an early-winter phenomenon. The top of the fog is at about 2,000-3,000 feet, so that if you drive up into the mountains a bit you come out above it. The forests in the lower ranges are very beautiful now with the autumn colours at their peak. Temperatures are getting fairly cold, the lasses have changed into ski clothes as town wear. In the last heavy snowfall, about two weeks ago, the snow came down to a few hundred feet above the town. The surrounding ranges once more look very attractive on the rare occasions when the fog clears to reveal them. Guess I really will have to put on skis soon.

S O C I A L N O T E S .

Now it can be told (with illustrations, too!!) just how Ron Knightley spends his leisure hours (or maybe minutes) on his many jaunts overseas. "Degenerating in North America" will set the atmosphere at the Club on November 17. Ron has not been willing to treat his visit to Japan with the same frankness, (Dorothy also reads the magazine). However, Ron is a popular man and his slides and commentary are bound to be of the usual high standards.

Bushwalkers will remember Mr. Piggot appearing on a previous programme. It was then that he showed his own beautiful movies on Japan and Thailand. We are fortunate to be seeing some more of these delightful screen gems on November 24. This time we will be seeing Mr. Piggot's impressions of New Zealand, Canberra and the Southern Alps.

The Sydney Rockclimbing Club are hoping to write a book about the history of climbing in N.S.W. and are asking all those who have participated in this sport to write up their recollections, with a bit of background interest to show what induced them to take up climbing. In the following article Dot Butler obliges.

"I was born a climber, as all children are, but whereas 9 million, 999 thousand, 99 out of 10 million have the climbing urge suppressed by fearful mothers, mine did nothing to discourage her children. It was no uncommon sight for the disapproving neighbours to see all or any of the five English children, ranging in age from 2 upwards, blinding along the tips of the paling fences, clambering over the roof of the two-story terrace houses, or shinning up the big backyard trees, a gently-nurtured little Momma doing her best to follow up behind "just to keep an eye on the baby." It soon became evident to her that the least proficient climber was herself, so she wisely retired and left us to it.

We lived our young life in the Western Suburbs. It was the horse and cart age. I was 7 before I saw my first motor car and 13 before I had my first ride in one. The rabbit-O and clothes-prop merchants called their wares through the slow suburban streets; the lamplighter came along at dusk with his ladder, put it up against the lamp-posts, and a slowly-growing line of soft yellow lights marked his progress.

We had no money, and took it for granted that the fun we had we had to make for ourselves. Climbing became our driving urge. Wiry and barefoot (none of us owned shoes till we went to high school), we ranged over our local territory, racing like a pack of young baboons up and down and over everything, both man-made and natural, that offered the slightest scope for getting off the horizontal. We could race to the top of the tallest pine tree in 10 seconds flat and descend in an almost straight drop, just checking at each branch as we shot through. The palms of our hands were so horny from swinging around on our home-made gym equipment (rusty waterpiping from the tip) that we could climb a telegraph pole, go hand over hand along the wire and come down the next pole. (Don't ask me why we weren't electrocuted).

Sundays, our pockets full of loquots and green quinces, we would trail off through the sheep paddocks, which in those days occupied a good part of the southern side of Homebush, through the marsh and ti-tree of Pott's Bush to the Chullora Railways yards. Just as the Sydney Rockies haunt Narrow Neck, so this place was our favourite testing ground. The prize was the great crane whose week-day job was to lift locomotives around. On Sundays it sat there, huge and unused. We would make a swift sortie from the railway cutting - up the arm, slide down the wire

cable and away before the caretaker spotted us and grabbed up his saltpetre gun. You can see that the race was to the swift. The railway yards possessed a great clay embankment, now removed. The civic fathers who tidy up their suburbs so that there are no wild challenges for the young climber are doing the present generation a great disservice. America is already in the sad position of being so scraped, scoured, sprayed, bulldozed and flattened that the only way for the urban young to let off steam is to gang up and go out and bash someone up. Let's hope our own land will not follow suit.

In the railway yards I tried out my first experient in artificial climbing. This revolved round a sawn-off screwdriver. It had a smooth, wooden handle, sympathetic to the grip. From the base of the clay cliff we would eye off a feasible route, then make a long run and get as high as we could with the impetus. The first pitch was invariably done in a state of swift excitment. The screwdriver would be plunged in with a mighty swing, the bare feet would rapidly excavate a toehold in the dry clay, and the climb was well started. So we ticked off all the mighty climbs close to home - sandstone quarries, clay pits, brick-koln chimneys (up their dark inside, where the littlest brother had difficulty getting started as his legs could barely stretch across), the outside of buildings, down wells, up posts and poles and pipes, trees and wires and cables. This was a glorious childhood.

By the time the two big brothers had reached high school age we were ready for more distant fields - a twopenny tram ride out to Bondi and the thrill of climbing the cliffs at Ben Buckler and jumping into the sea. It used to get very rough at times but that only added to the excitment. It was a lonely unfrequented end of the beach. Generally we would have it to ourselves, but sometimes there would be a group of youths, with one wild-eyed beautiful girl among them, all diving and swimming in the bombora as naked as the day they were born. The story was she was a University student who suffered an attack of encephalitis which had left her slightly crazy. She was Bee Miles. A recent newspaper picture of her in an Old Women's Home - a fat lethargic, tamed old woman of 60 - was enough to make one weep for ~~what~~ destructive Time can do.

Gradully the English family's climbing team disintegrated. The brothers migrated to tennis, racing motor-cars and canoeing respectively, the elder sister went away to the country, school teaching, and two years after leaving school, I joined the Bushwalkers. It was like a hand fitting into a glove that was exactly made for it; Bushwalking and I were made for each other. For twelve years I never missed a week-end in the Bush.

There was a pack of us numbering ten or a dozen. These were the "Tigers" who eventually developed into the Rock-climbing Section of the S.B.W. All, without exception, were outstanding for speed and endurance. The Leader was Gordon Smith ("Smithy"), a Big Ben Bolt type, big and quiet, powerful but modest. He worked at the Treasury and to save money walked sixteen miles to and from work each day. He held Marathon cross-country walking records. To keep up with his 5-mile an hour pace through the bush I used to run. From then on I ran everywhere and didn't stop till I was married and having my first baby.

There was Max Gentle. He was a builder. When his profession was hit by the Depression Max got on his pushbike and cycled up to Townsville looking for work, through millions of acres of prickly pear and a puncture every couple of miles from the thorns.

Jack De Bert, instigator of the S.B.Ws in 1927 or 1928, was also one of the mob. The Depression drove him down to Burragorang Valley where he ran a pig farm and as each new batch of piglets arrived they were named after Bushwalker girls. Pig farming brought in no money so De Bert used to walk up to Yerranderie each week to collect the Dole.

There was Alex Colley who did his first 3-week bushwalk alone on 28 lbs of unpolished rice - because it was cheap (only 5d. a lb). "Little Alex" lived almost exclusively on unpolished rice and oatmeal while the Depression lasted. The Bushwalkers assigned him a crest in Heraldry - a (collie) dog rampant on a steak Dormant on a field of unpolished rice.

I had my first job as a physiotherapist at the Children's Hospital at Collaroy and used to ride the pushbike 150 miles a week between home and work and the University. In two years I had cycled 25,000 miles, or once round the world.

Other tough ones in the Tigers were Bert Whillier, Tim Coffey, Bill Hall, Dave Stead, Hilma Galliot, Jess Martin, Bill McCosker and Bill Mullins the poet. Permanently resident in Bill's pack was a book of poetry and a bottle partly full of Rhinegold with which we would drink the success of a climb and leave the bottle as a memento on the summit.

One of the leading characters in the Bushwalkers at that time was Marie Byles, Australia's first women lawyer and also the country's first (and probably only) mountaineer. She was a friend of Dr. Eric Dark and in 1936 they organised a trip to the Warrumbungles and invited me along. This was my first introduction to technical climbing. Accustomed to rushing up and over rock faces barefoot and unroped, jumping for likely-looking holds, swinging about on scant bits of vegetation growing out of

cliffs, it was a new (and somewhat painful) experience to be tied on to a restraining rope, hooked over impeding belays, obliged to "stop and make sure two holds are secure before relinquishing the third". I got very restive under all this restraint and wondered how anyone could want to take all the joy out of climbing in this leaden-footed manner. I was highly suspicious of my partner on the rope when he contemplated a difficult pitch - if he falls I am pulled off with him. I would have made a good team mate to Dr. Dark's friend, Salmon, and his Queenslanders who scorned the use of rope, not because I thought it sissy but because I thought it damned dangerous when shared with another climber. So much for independence. By the time I had spent ten days climbing in the Warrumbungles with that superb teacher, Eric Dark, I was quite reconciled to using a rope, and even thought it rather fun.

After we had climbed the hitherto unclimbed Crater Bluff and returned to Sydney, Marie sent in an account of our success to the leading Sydney newspaper which came up with the paragraph that Miss Byles was amazed at the skill and agility shown by one, Dot English and now that she had proved herself on this first-grade climb she was going to form a Rock Climbing Section of the Sydney Bushwalkers. This was news to me, but I was quite happy to oblige Marie. Consequently I worded the tigers, Marie donated us a practically brand new climbing rope with a red and blue stripe woven through it in true Continental mountaineering style, and there we were, as you might say, founded. The year was 1936."

DAY WALKS.

November 21. Otford - Burning Palms - Era - Garie. 6 miles.
There are 3 walks programmed for the Burning Palms - Era locality on this particular week-end. If you can't get away for the week-end ^{jump} the day walk. Traverses part of the Garrawarra Primitive Area with some fine coastal views. Suitable for new members.

Train: 8.42 a.m. Wollongong train from Central Steam Station to Otford.
Tickets: Otford return @ 8/- plus 2/6 bus fare Garie to Waterfall.
Map: Port Hacking Tourist.
Leader: Phyllis Ratcliffe.

November 28. Waterfall - Uloola Falls - Heathcote. 8 miles. Now that there has been good rain, the pools along Uloola Creek will be fresh and clear again. This walk takes in the South Western Corner of the National Park. Suitable for new walkers. Train: 8.50 a.m. Cronulla train from Central Electric Station to Sutherland. CHANGE AT SUTHERLAND for rail motor to Waterfall. Tickets: Waterfall return @ 6/-. Map: Port Hacking Tourist.
Leader: Dick Child - NOTE telephone No. is 550411 (B) x.66.

See the new Walks Programme for details of the Day Walks during December - available later this month. _____

NATURAL HISTORY - "TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE".

- Bill Gillam.

The Dewey decimal system of cataloguing books had not reached the High School level while I was there. In those years the shelves were crammed with books which were called by their true names and didn't masquerade under something like 610.III. It was a very serious school and so gave more space to Economics and Physics than to Travel and Adventure. I do not know what Dewey would call this genre. In line of SF and BEM let us call it TA.

I heard an eminent book reviewer recently state that if all the books published on the Northern Territory were to be laid end to end they would stretch from Vestey's Meat Works to Ayers Rock. Once there was only the ubiquitous "We of the Never Never" and the rarer "Buffaloes." No doubt a Greek said much the same thing when Odysseus came home from the Black Sea. The post war availability of travel and the readiness to devour the printed word garnished with astonishing colour prints are to an extent self-catalytic. These days a person writes a book in order to travel which gives him increasingly the once in a life time chance to take more, and more technically perfect kodachromes. In the avalanche of such books there are certain to be pedestrian Englishmen discovering Australia or Australians discovering Canada or Canadians discovering summer skiing in Peru. Most of these are eminently forgettable. They appeal mainly to those stay at homes who have to take their travel and adventure as they do their vices, vicariously. Occasionally an author finds he can do this sort of thing with more than average competence and can produce, as Colin Simpson has, an interesting and semi-definitive series. Such people are kept in reasonable comfort by their publishers who take as much interest in their foreign vaccinations as dust on the camera lens or a frayed typewriter ribbon.

Of far more interest, to myself, are those TA books produced incidentally to the Author's main line of work. Anthropologists everywhere have read "North American Indians in the Pacific" and have almost universally wished that the author had not come ashore from the Kon Tiki. Kon Tiki, written with the left hand so to speak, is a masterpiece, fitting the TA concept perfectly. The more scholarly work, produced after an immense gestation has produced in its own scientific circle the 20th century equivalent of asking its author, like Gallileo, to recant. One can imagine, faintly, Heyerdahl saying "Perhaps" and under his breath "But I still think so."

In the same rich lode as Kon Tiki is "Apu Apu", the unravelling of the mystery of the Easter Island Statues. The statues, severly



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stylised and apparently erected magically, had baffled Western minds for 200 years. The same insight and love of travel and adventure that led to Kon Tiki plus some friendly interest and the islanders not only produced a half finished statue but became sufficiently enthusiastic to see if their verbal traditions were in fact viable. Nowadays there are colour slides to prove that those traditions were more than a myth. A book devoted to such a triumph justifies a lot of the genre.

A journey, travelling is one of the most valid and enduring symbols in literature. Serious and great novelists have written TA as a preliminary study of their material. Grahame Green visited Mexico during one of its more violent anti-clerical and prohibitionist phases. Such a combination of attitudes alone would make a wonderful novel. "Lawless Roads" was published as a TA study for the more polished fictional account appearing as "The Power and the Glory". Green's travels in West Africa produced "Journey without Maps" which became symbolically and in fact "The Heart of the Matter".

Joseph Conrad spent his life on the sea, with travellers and men who in all senses of the word were adventurers. His novels became a complex memoir of all the voyages he had made, all the odd people he had met and showed a colonial world more realistic than the popular Kipling. "Heart of Darkness" read as travel literature is one of the most adventurous stories ever written.

Very often such ventures by authors have been misunderstood by the critics who have hailed, maliciously, the demise of the authors talents. Hemingway was castigated for "Death in the Afternoon" by the same critics who applauded his preoccupation with death, despair and courage in earlier books. When he wrote the "Green Hills of Africa" mock prayers were offered for his salvation and hopes expressed that he would become disenchanted with the life which he had been leading. But from the mass of words he wrote on bullfighting and the peculiar elation of big game hunting as it was then practised, he assayed with fire some of the most monumental short tales ever written. Then there was the fisherman who had fished for one hundred and something days; recently a Cuban exile claimed to be Hemingway's real-life character. Such is the way to martyrdom.

One of the most satisfying TA books of the local scene is "Journey among Men" a joint and successful effort by Russel Drysdale and Don Serventy; and artist with an unsuspected gift for expression in words and a biologist with an acute understanding of men.

Slide nights, however halting the dialogue and unselective the eye are Travel and Adventure. An addict as I am will listen and watch. And take willingly such adventures vicariously.

Extracts from a letter by Bill O'Neill, who sailed for England last week.

"The time has now come for me to say au revoir as I prepare to return to my homeland. It is with mingled feelings of pleasure and regret that I look forward and back reviewing, reflecting and planning the next phase ahead.

It has given me great pleasure to associate with the S.B.W. - an honour to represent the club and a lasting joy to have shared the wonderful companionship of the members in the club - a remembrance which I will greatly treasure - for I do not know at this stage whether it will be possible to return to this fair land. - It is my hope that this will be possible but circumstances make it quite impossible to forecast such an event - it may well be sooner or indeed later than one anticipates.

As one who comes from afar, the activities of the club have much influenced my appreciation of Australia - this may be a little hard to understand by those who have moved very little outside their own particular environment. Coming from overseas, the immediate impressions can often encourage an altogether erroneous picture - heavily prejudiced and subsequently distorted. I have no hesitation in stating that the Club, thro its activities and its members - has thro the cause of my association with it, enlarged and enriched my perception to the degree that my pen falters for want of words to adequately qualify this remark. Perhaps the quality that appears above all - to express this - is compatability - a term which over the last 6 - 9 months has been much to the fore in the deliberations of the Club and its official activities. May I, in prasing this attribute pray that this may be so nutured and cherished that longevity of the Club be assured and perpetuated - it is the life blood of the club itself - may I endorse the remarks made by Dorothy Lawry (N.Z.) in a recent letter for the summing up of my sentiments and affection for the Club.

My address for all correspondence in the future will be as under.

W.A. O'Neill,
60 Brassie Avenue,
East Acton. London. W.3.
United Kingdom. "



S. B. W.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

HELD ON

SATURDAY 11th DECEMBER

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