www.prestbury.net

Prestbury Parish Magazine

North Cheltenham Team Ministry

North Cheltenham Team Ministry

August 2025

£1

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When the office is unattended please leave a message on the answerphone

Baptisms (Christenings) & Weddings

may be arranged with the Team Office *(contact details above)*

Other Pastoral Matters & Reconciliation (Confession)

please contact one of the clergy *(telephone numbers above)*

Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editors, the Clergy, the Parochial Church Council, or of any authoritative body of the Church of England

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Mary and St Nicolas Prestbury Cheltenham - Registered Charity No 1130933

continued inside back cover

Cover Picture:
The confetti fields at Wyck, near Pershore
details from a picture by Helen Mann
Helen writes, The fields have closed for harvesting for this year but worth putting in your diary for a visit next year

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs, or more specifically 'pictures', have been my life. Encouraged by my father to draw from the age of four, I began earning money with my artwork while at school in my early teenage years. I took on the art homework for 'clients' while at the Central School, Cheltenham. I don't remember what I charged but it worked well until Mr Ski, our art-master, discovered that more than one boy's artistic talents improved dramatically overnight, which at first puzzled him. After being rumbled, I switched to drawing the female figure and these pictures sold well for sixpence a time. I copied the work of recognised artists adding embellishment where needed to satisfy my pals' requirements. It really was a good way to learn figure drawing, essential for later life, without sacrificing time and tuition fees. My teenage followers were quite demanding and would not pay up for a bad drawing.

Photography began both on the polo ground and at the racecourse on Malta during my National Service years. Horse-mad, I used the only camera I could afford, a £2 Box Brownie, to photograph the polo ponies I exercised in my off-duty hours. That was not a commercial venture, but to send home illustrating the long and frequent letters written. A transfer to the Royal Navy for five weeks gave me wonderful opportunities to use my camera at towns along the French Riviera and on excursions up into the Alpes Maritimes. More importantly, it was on the beach at Juan les Pins that I came across an English film star, one Hy Hazell, reputed to be the owner of the longest legs in showbiz! This I can verify, as she displayed them beautifully while sitting on her beach towel, wearing a cream one-piece swimsuit while she studied the script for her next film, 'Celia'! Miss Hazell was very obliging and was pleased to pose for my primitive camera. Back on-board ship, orders were taken for prints of this shot from sailors who wanted to send home photos of the glamour girl, claiming it was they who had met her! A very lucrative venture and that was the very first photo I ever sold. Incidentally, the TV channel 'Talking Pictures' showed the film 'Celia' back in March and again in June this year. I had to wait seventy-six years before I could see Hy Hazell in action!

That camera purchased new for £2 also kick-started my business of racehorse photography. The year was 1953, I was aged 23 and had been back in Civvy Street for three years. Standing at the penultimate fence at Prestbury Park waiting to photograph the horses as they negotiated the obstacle, I noticed two Land Rovers following the horses round on the opposite side of the course. This was unusual in those far-off days. As soon as the runners had taken the water jump, the open-top Land Rovers turned sharp left and headed across the undulations in the centre of the racecourse and straight towards me. Meanwhile, the horses carried on around the far end of the course. It would be three minutes before they reached my fence. The cars would get to me in half that time.

Both vehicles pulled up three metres from where I was standing. You can imagine my astonishment when I realised The Queen was in one and The Queen Mother in the other! There and then I decided not to photograph the horses, so turned my back on the track and faced the Land Rovers. What a sensible move that turned out to be! My shot of The Queen was a failure as she remained seated behind the windscreen and all I achieved was the reflection of a groundsman. The Queen Mother, on the other hand, stood up, raised her binoculars and then with the horses about to jump the fence, lowered them. In a split-

second I aimed and pressed the button. The resulting black and white picture was exclusive, used many times in the media and in books and magazines over many years.

The money made from that little Box Brownie, and after that a 35mm Voigtlander, enabled me to realise my ambition of being the owner of the Rolls Royce of all cameras, a 35mm Leica M2. That was in 1958, and I have used nothing but Leicas ever since. Now in a position to photograph everything to a very high standard, I had heeded the advice given by Eric Franks, my next-door neighbour in New Barn Lane. Eric worked for the publishing firm of Ed J Burrow in Cheltenham, was held in high esteem in the professional photographic world and during wartime had served in the RAF as an aerial cameraman. His advice? "Always buy the very best camera you can afford". I would add to that, that it is a great advantage to be in the right place at the right time! This can often be engineered but more often than not, luck plays an important role as it did at Prestbury Park in 1953 when The Queen Mother presented herself to my Box Brownie!

Cheltenham 1953.

Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother watching her horse (M'as-Tu-Vu) in action at close quarters. Left to right: Lady Hyde (Lady-in-Waiting), Lord Abergavenny, Captain Frank Spicer.

It was not until 1961 that I became personally involved with The Queen Mother. Over the years, she had become familiar with my race photos and enjoyed what she saw. In February of that year, Sir Martin Gilliatt, Her Majesty's Private Secretary, phoned to say how much Queen Elizabeth liked my work and would be very pleased if I would concentrate my efforts on photographing her racehorses in action at every opportunity. "May I tell Her Majesty that you would be pleased to do so?" That of course was music to my ears, so I do not need to tell you my reply! Incidentally, that Land Rover episode in 1953 was the only time The Queen and Queen Mother came out onto the open spaces of any racecourse. Tight security demanded they stay in the confines of the grandstands and enclosures under the watchful eyes of their personal police staff. I often wonder if the publicity given by my little £2 Box Brownie of them enjoying complete freedom, had anything to do with that!

So much so for action photography. It was now the late sixties and time for me to take on portrait photography, as there were ever-increasing demands to photograph celebrities of one sort or another. Besides, it would obviously be of great benefit when asked to make a caricature. For this new venture I turned my back on racing and aimed at my job in

industry. It had always been custom for new intake and overseas visitors of importance at Spirax Sarco to be sent into Cheltenham to 'Studio Manek' to have a portrait photo taken, at great expense and usage of company time. With delegates coming here from all parts of the world, time was valuable. So, I approached L G Northcroft, MD and founder of the firm, and suggested that I took those necessary portrait photos. "It would save both time and expense, Sir." I hoped he would agree and send me to night school to learn this particular branch of photography. My ulterior motive of course was to be able to add this new skill to my racing portfolio without having to dip into my own pocket. Northcroft peered at me over his great mahogany desk and twiddled his thumbs (an erstwhile habit). After a while of contemplating, he asked "Do you think you can?" My reply was "If I didn't think so, I would not have suggested it". I was now in at the deep end and in the world of pretence as I had no idea what to do. In this situation and with this man, there was no way I could back out, so I waited to hear what he had to say. "Right, you can start with me at 2pm!"

I darted home, grabbed camera and tripod, then called into town and bought a 500-watt light bulb which I hung from a wire in the ceiling of my Spirax studio. At 2pm in walked LGN and I asked him to sit on my high draughtsman's chair. Looking at the electric light bulb dangling on its wire and then at me, Lionel Northcroft asked, "Are you sure you know what you are doing?" I refrained from saying "I've no idea", and instead said nothing.

My elevated draughtsman's chair had wheels, so I was able to push my subject about under the light until I had the shadows on his face to my liking and then I released the shutter on my Leica. He began to climb off the chair, but I had to tell him in a very firm voice, "No Sir. Get back on the chair, I haven't finished yet!" I don't think anyone had spoken to him like that since he was a child and having climbed back onto the chair, he looked at me with the quizzical expression I was hoping for. It was one of his trademarks, alongside the twiddling of thumbs. I pressed the button and Hey, Presto! The resulting photograph was used over the years multiple times in books and in the media. From that moment on, no-one was sent into town to Studio Manek.

Through experience, I taught myself the art of portrait photography and began to realise a lot of it was not technical but whether or not the photographer and his subject 'clicked'. So instead of the impersonal portraits of a professional studio, I quickly made my subjects feel completely at ease. When my work was hung in the Spirax Portrait Gallery alongside that of Manek, one could see the difference, so although the previous pictures were more formal, those now dangling on their hooks had a much more pleasant and personal look about them. Before long, I was confident enough to launch out into the world of the celebrity and eventually Royalty, which was the very thick icing on a fascinating cake!

Bernard Parkin

This month's theme is PHOTOGRAPHS

A question for you……

(Answers to the Editor please!!)

During a recent visit to France, the people we were staying with took us to a small village in the Dordogne called Saint Avit Seignure where there is an old church - well-known as a staging post for pilgrims walking the Camino de Santiago de Compostela.

The current building was constructed in the Roman period – between the end of the XI and the beginning of the XII century. At the beginning of the latter, the body of Saint Avit was brought for burial according to a transcription in the church.

Whilst looking round the church, I noticed that about halfway down, on each side of the centre aisle, there was a wooden structure among the normal rows of pews. Please see the right-hand photo below.

I'd be interested if anyone knows what prompted these structures, and also what they are/were used for. (There was no-one around to ask.) I could only think (a) that they were for the high-ranking families of the area, or (b) to contain naughty toddlers!

It could well be that these are not uncommon – just my ignorance. But I would be pleased to get any feedback. I have visited quite a number of churches in various countries and have never come across them before.

Stella Caney

WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS?

Canoeists on the Thames

Only the other day, I was in Tivoli Trading hardware shop looking for a replacement for a broken plastic lever for a cistern. The new assistant took a photograph of the broken item on his phone and sent the image to his friend who explained where the package could be found and hey presto there it was wrapped in plastic for £3.99.

Similarly, in the church's own Charity Shop 'Dearly Pre-Loved', Julia has an app on her phone called 'Rate My Stuff'. Take a photograph of an item and the app comes up with comparable items and their prices.

Photography has come a long way since the Daguerreotype and the Kinematograph. Who a few years ago would have thought that we would have in our hands a miniature computer called a mobile phone able to take and send images of quality across the globe and do so almost instantly?

For various reasons, I have just watched again on YouTube in black-and-white the Pathé Review of the Year 1938 which is full of period detail, with its newsreel snippets, rousing music and ominously gung-ho commentary. With appearances by Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain and George VI, it is also an astonishingly graphic reminder of a vanished era on the brink of world war. Without photography, we would still rely primarily on documents and the written word to recapture impressions of the vanished past.

In a sense then, photography acts like memory and is able to capture for us moments in time which might otherwise be forgotten. As Karl Lagerfeld said, 'What I like about photographs is that they capture a moment that's gone forever, impossible to reproduce.'

As photographic images proliferate, however, I have some nostalgic feelings for older days when film was developed and we waited to see how photos would turn out. In those days, there was a viewfinder through which photographs could be composed. We could select

the best and display photographs in albums. Remember Brownie Box Cameras and Kodak films? The instant interest of Polaroid images? The interminable slide show? The family 8mm ciné films with the hot and fiddly projector?

And now cameras are everywhere in the developed world, an interesting phrase in the context. Selfies have bred selfie-sticks and self-portraits are taken in front of famous paintings or famous buildings, and with famous people.

As far as I am aware, the earliest war to have been photographed was the Crimean War by the photographer Roger Fenton with his evocative stills from 1854. If Shackleton's Antarctic expeditions had not been photographed so skilfully by Frank Hurley, we would have fewer graphic images of the extreme conditions endured.

I have no doubt that the arrival of photography and particularly of colour photography changed the nature and course of art and painting. Over time too, photography has become an art in itself with its own stars, styles and pricey collectibles. Nevertheless, Lord Snowdon once said: 'Photography is not art. It's pressing buttons. People take it up because they can't draw.' And with typical wit, George Bernard Shaw scathingly observed that 'The photographer is like the cod, which produces a million eggs in order that one may reach maturity.'

After the smudged grainy black-and-white images of a pineapple plantation in the Geography text book, I remember the informative excitement of the glossy colour photographs in the National Geographic magazine. And now colour images are everywhere in our lives and culture from the cinema and television to books, catalogues and the internet.

How well will photographs last, I wonder. Unless they are helpfully labelled, preferably with a name and date, family photographs can produce more questions than answers. Hard drives on computers must now contain many pictures but what will happen to them all? Photographs are of course invaluable to remind us of what people looked like and it is no surprise that family photographs are so often prized, with some celebrities choosing a photograph album as their luxury item on 'Desert Island Discs'. The National Portrait Gallery started at the beginnings of commercial photography in 1856 and, since then, generations in many families have been captured on film.

Conventionally, photographs present an illuminated image of life but without its textures, tastes and smells, and photography presents a monocular vision, unless you too remember those stereoscopic discs of photographs in the vintage View-Master series.

Nobody knows who first said that a picture is worth a thousand words. The idea has been attributed to Arthur Brisbane in the context of advertising. For me, photographs can also provide a visual reminder of the world's astonishing variety and beauty.

►

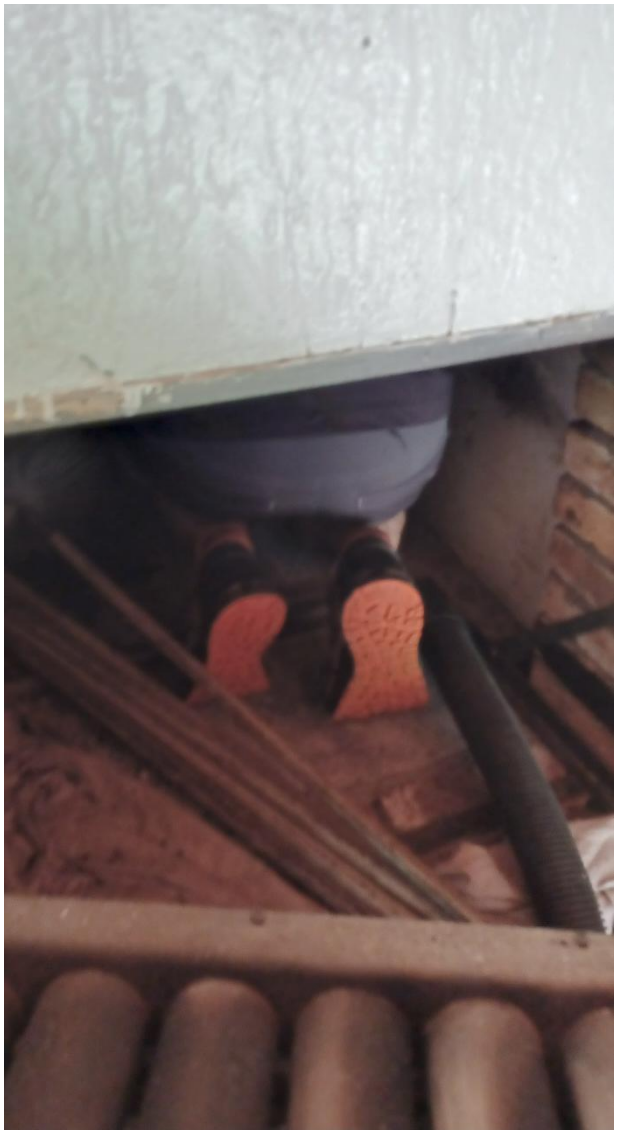
Poppy field near Coberley, 2010

Duncan Forbes

Angie's Fireplace

(see next page)

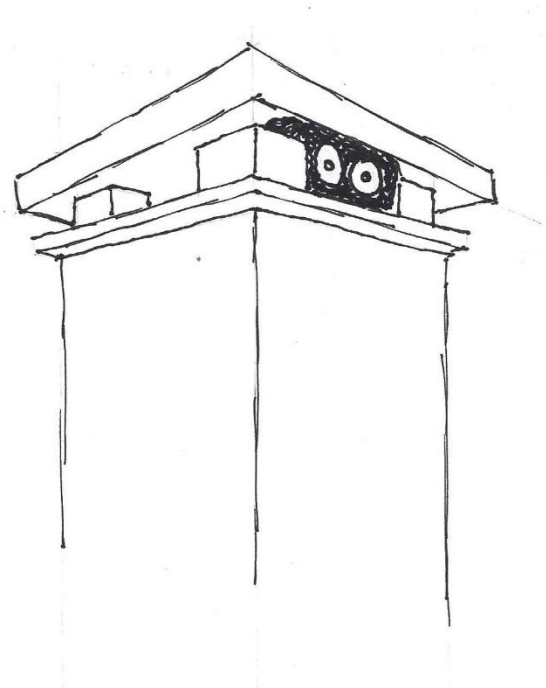
En France, on envoie encore les petits garçons par la cheminée



Once a year Angie has her chalet chimney swept. For those of you who can remember having the chimneys swept as a child will recall all the preparations that had to be made, with covering the furniture with dust sheets and the floor with tarpaulin will doubtless have sympathy with the preparations Angie has to go through. In addition, however, because she has an enclosed wood burning fire, this has to be removed. Now comes the tricky bit to manoeuvre the heavy cast iron fire out of the chimney. So with three of us wriggling and twisting it we usually get it to the edge of the chimney breast. Ah! Now the fire has a fan to drive the heat out into the room, this is connected by a very, very short cable to the internal wall of the chimney breast. Whilst two of us support the fire another grabs a chair and we perch it precariously on that. H&S, 'no comment'!

NOW the little 14-stone boy can vacuum the chimney with brushes attached to its nozzle. This is after all the 21st Century. Next the cement lining has to be inspected for cracks. This is when we return to the 18th Century and the little, 14-stone boy, disappears inside and up the chimney. There is not much room in there,

Angie and I did crawl in the bottom once (one at a time) to examine a crack in the lining which had to be re-rendered and then checked when complete, (that means we crawled in twice!)



Then of course the cast iron fire has to return to its original position. Fortunately, now, with the advent of the 20s, Le Ramoneur, what a wonderful title, brings a wheeled crane with him, the wonders of modern technology. In the end though despite these wonderous inventions the little boy still has to go UP THE CHIMNEY!

Foot note:

I can still recall my father-in-law cleaning his chimneys and how it was someone's job to go outside and shout when the brush emerged from the chimney pot. I leave you to imagine what Angie and I look for at her chalet!!!

Photos Angie Brassey. Text John Moles.

Prestbury Life in 1953

Prestbury Coronation Procession

taken from the garden of Delhome Cottage (opposite the War Memorial in 1953.

"BOXER" is between the shafts of the farm cart loaded, not with hay but with the Prestbury Village Bellringers and their barrel of Church Farm cider, mugs of which were handed to bystanders. PC Lodge, the village policeman is on the extreme right.

Close-up of the Prestbury Village Bellringers on their farm cart before heading into Cheltenham for the Grand Coronation Procession.

They rang the handbells as they toured the Cheltenham streets and dispensed cider to the crowds watching making their "float" very popular – that is until the cider ran out!

Left to right: in white sunhat is Roy Taylor, Bernard Parkin is seated in white hat with legs dangling, behind him is Anabel Rowles, seated in a white smock is Frank Pendrey (tower captain), and the driver is Dudley Surman.

The Cheltenham Coronation Procession was a splendid affair with about 30 (or more) floats and three marching bands.

Pictures taken by the Echo
The descriptions are from Bernard Parkin

Marle Hill WI

We met on Monday 7 July when we celebrated our 54th Birthday. Members were asked to bring a bring-and-share plate of food. We also invited 2 members from surrounding WI's.

Our speaker was a lovely lady, Angela Rendall, who gave a very interesting insight into how ladies in Jane Austin's era dressed. Kate, her daughter, demonstrated the clothes from day wear, to going to special occasions.

We continue to enjoy our Book Club, Knit & Natter, walks, workshops, meals out and social events.

We do not meet in August. A coach trip has been arranged for several of us to go to Hampton Court, Chelsea Flower gardens and the Chelsea Pensioners.

Our next meeting is on Monday 1 September 2025 at 7:30pm. Our speaker will be Adrian Moss talking about the Commonwealth War Graves.

We meet at St Nicolas Church Hall.

Do come as a visitor and you will be warmly welcomed.

If you want any more information contact Sara Jefferies.

Sue Davies
Marle Hill

A **repair café** is a community initiative helping people extend the life of everyday items instead of sending them to landfill. There is interest in having one in Prestbury but to get started we urgently need enthusiastic volunteers, that is
Event helpers, Organisers, Supporters and of course
Repairers who can do any of the following:

- Fix small electrical items
- Troubleshoot electronic issues
- Sharpen tools
- Repair clothes & textiles
- Do general DIY or Bike maintenance
- Have other skills that might be useful

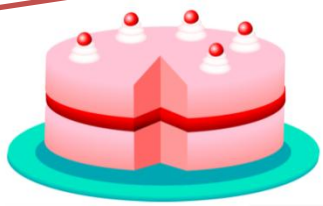
If you can spare a few hours once a month and would like to be involved in any way please let us know.
Contact *rose@liles.me.uk* or tel: 01242 237086

Forthcoming Events

Welcome on Wednesday

We regret this is CANCELLED

Wednesday, 20 August at **2.30pm in the St Nicolas Room**. There will be home-made cakes, tea or coffee for £2 and the chance to meet friends and have a friendly chat. So please come along, maybe bringing a neighbour?



Bereavement Friendship Group

We will be meeting in St Mary's Church, Prestbury on Monday 18 August at 2.15-4pm

If you have lost a loved one and would like to talk to others in a similar situation, please come along. You will be most welcome, whether you are new or have come before.

Light refreshments will be provided. *Marion Povey*

Concert with Cake

Sunday 7 September 3:00pm

St Mary's Church, Mill Street, GL52 3BQ

St Mary's Patronal Festival

All Welcome!

Severn's Eight Close Harmony

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Adults £5, children free

Tickets from David Lyle 07487 869152 *david.lyle@prestbury.net*

Advertisements

TIMES OF REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

St Mary's Church, Prestbury

Sunday		0800	Said Eucharist
	1st Sunday	0930	Breakfast Celebrate! – All-age worship
	Other Sundays	0900	Breakfast Celebrate! at Infant School
		1100	Sung Eucharist
	1st Sunday	1830	Evening Prayer at Capel Court
	2nd Sunday	1700	Benediction
	Other Sundays	1700	Evening Prayer
Thursday		1030	Said Eucharist

St Nicolas Church, Prestbury

Sunday		0930*	Sung Eucharist
Tuesday		1000	Said Eucharist

All Saints Church, Pittville

Sunday		0800	Holy Mass
		1030*	Solemn Mass
	1st & 3rd Sunday	1730	Choral Evensong and Benediction
	Other Sundays	1730	Evening Prayer and Benediction
Wednesday		1830	Holy Mass
Thursday		1115	Holy Mass
Friday		1200	Holy Mass
Saturday	1st Saturday	1000	Holy Mass for Our Lady of Walsingham

St Lawrence Church, Swindon Village

Sunday	1st Sunday	0930	Family Communion
		1700	Evensong
	2nd Sunday	0930	BCP Holy Communion
	3rd Sunday	0930	Holy Communion
		1700	Evensong
	4th Sunday	0930	Holy Communion
	5th Sundays	1000	Benefice Holy Communion alternates with St Mary Magdalene

St Mary Magdalene Church, Elmstone Hardwicke

Sunday	1st Sunday	1100	BCP Holy Communion
	2nd Sunday	1100	Family Service (no communion)
	3rd Sunday	1100	Holy Communion
	4th Sunday	1100	Holy Communion
	5th Sunday	1000	Benefice Holy Communion alternates with St Lawrence
Wednesday	2nd Wednesday	1900	Celtic Evening Prayer
Thursday	4th Thursday	1900	Celtic Communion

* These services are usually streamed on the internet. These and other services are recorded so may be accessed live or later on the Team's YouTube page -

https://www.youtube.com/NorthCheltenhamTeamMinistry/streams

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Copy Dates and Themes for Future Magazines 2025

Issue		Copy Date		Theme
September	Sunday	17	August	Routine
October	Sunday	14	September	Crafts
November	Sunday	12	October	Avenues
Dec / Jan	Sunday	16	November	New Year

Prestbury Parish Magazine is usually published on the last Sunday of the month. The copy date is usually the Sunday 2 weeks before this, but there may be scope for some flexibility.

Copy may be sent in a clearly marked envelope to 'Prestbury Parish Magazine'
2 Honeysuckle Close, Prestbury, Cheltenham, GL52 5LN
or preferably by email to **magazine@prestbury.net**

September 2025 Magazine Theme: Routine
Please send copy by Sunday 17 August 2025
or soon after

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butcombe.com/loyalty

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