

South Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire Ramblers Annual Report 2018/19



ramblers
at the heart of walking

CHAIR & SECRETARY'S REPORT

We were delighted this year to welcome The Rt Hon the Lord David Blunkett, or merely David, as the President of SYNED for a 3-year period. David said how happy he would be to support us. He is a walker himself and attended the launch of the Rotherham Ring Route Revival in June, taking part in the walk afterwards.

The 2018 SYNED AGM was hosted by the Rotherham Metro Group at Herringthorpe. The AGM was preceded by a walk (memorably wet underfoot). Our then-President, Roly Smith, highlighted the publication of *Clarion Call: Sheffield's Access Pioneers*, which celebrated the success of the Clarion Ramblers, one of the first working-class rambling clubs in the country, led by the charismatic GBH Ward. The book also records the leading role, which the city of Sheffield played over the years in the fight for access to mountain and moorland. SYNED funded the publication of the book but it is a pleasure to report that sales have gone better than anticipated and that the book is being re-printed.

Nationally, Vanessa Griffiths has continued to push the walking agenda and champion the kind of externally facing, forward looking, positive culture which we all want to encourage across our charity. Allen Pestell and Jez Kenyon attended General Council at Bangor, in Wales in April and were delighted at the positive atmosphere that continues to be created.

At the last AGM we reported on an exciting development at Longshaw, a permanent exhibition of the early history of the development of rambling in the area. Regrettably this project was cancelled. However, some of the material is now on display at the Western Park museum in Sheffield, including GBH Ward's boots! All items are being professionally conserved and there is no cost to SYNED.

During the year the Dearne Valley Group produced a document on publicity, which contained much good advice and positive

suggestions for other groups to follow. The most important factor appears to be for a group to have a dedicated publicity officer.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into force at the end of May. Area Council discussed the matter. A document was circulated to SYNED groups. It is worth noting that the members of Area Council agreed to continue to use 'open' email addresses rather than blind copy addresses.

Allen Pestell has co-operated with Barnsley MBC to send a letter to Dan Jarvis, the new mayor of the Sheffield City region, making suggestions regarding the promotion of walking and the protection of the countryside with the appointment of somebody specifically to promote these issues.

Membership figures nationally continue to show a fall. Walkers now have a far greater choice of walking groups to choose from, and central office accepts that not keeping up with modern technology means the good work that Ramblers does is generally unrecognised. This issue is now being addressed by central office.

As can be seen from the figures that follow, SYNED has shown an increase in membership during the last year, with the national figures continuing to show a decline. When studying inter-group figures various factors may lie behind the figures, for example, some of the younger groups feed the older groups (viz Sheffield 20s to Sheffield 40s perhaps) and that a group may have undergone an internal crisis and be rebuilding, etc.

Finally, thanks to the whole Area Council and the vital Group secretaries, all of whom contribute their time and effort to make SYNED, and the Groups within it, so successful.

Allen Pestell (Chair) & David Gadd (Secretary)

Figures for the groups within SYNED as at October each year:

Membership	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Barnsley & Peniston	204	195	186	175	152	143
Chesterfield&NED	505	515	478	441	433	422
Chesterfield 20s	226	220	232	261	232	228
Dearne Valley	99	103	103	107	116	139
Doncaster	234	230	234	227	208	230
Rotherham	269	266	270	268	248	251
Sheffield	661	657	617	605	584	565
Sheff 40s	179	215	233	231	232	253
Sheff 20s	226	220	232	261	232	228
SYNED	2399	2420	2420	2365	2264	2294
NATIONAL		107369	107990	105990	104694	102818

BARNLSLEY AND PENISTONE RAMBLERS

We have had another busy year walking on Saturdays and Sundays, averaging approximately 15 members on each walk. Walks are structured between 8 to 10 miles from easy to strenuous, hopefully to accommodate all abilities. The group have also enjoyed several weekends away exploring other parts of the countryside.

We have had a few enjoyable social evenings, which are open to members and their partners. *The Summer Christmas Party* (yes really...) with pie and peas was a big success.

A group of six of our members tackled the Cumbria Way earlier this year. It was apparently a very challenging walk and climb, albeit with beautiful scenery and fabulously sunny weather. However, they all enjoyed the experience.

Our walks programme is distributed across the area through local libraries and resource centres and we have had several new

members join the group this year. Luckily one of our new members is a keen walk leader and has been taking us on some new paths around the area.

We are still finding problems with some paths, which are either overgrown or have been ploughed over. However, due to the usual Council cutbacks little repair work is being done, but we keep in touch with Barnsley Council at the regular Local Access Meetings.

Our thanks go to all our walk leaders and social organisers for providing the group with an interesting and enjoyable programme of events throughout the year.

Carol Wood (Chair)





After recent years declining membership, the numbers for 2018 seem to have stabilised at around 420. New members have arrested this decline but unfortunately they have not helped with the declining number of leaders. This has meant that to maintain our challenging walks programme of up to 9 winter walks per week and 11 summer walks per week leaders have had to step up to the mark and submit more than their fair share of walks. Our thanks go out to them.

As well as our own programme, this year, our leaders have supported the annual Chesterfield Walking Festival and the inaugural Chesterfield Canal Trust Walking Festival. The latter includes walks along the entire 46 mile length of the canal from West Stockwith on the River Trent to Chesterfield and also the popular 'Boat and Boots' walks which includes completing the route on one of the four trip boats that the Trust operates.

September also saw David Blunkett join us on a Saturday walk around Chatsworth.

The Footpath Maintenance Team continue to have trouble with Derbyshire Council whose lack of support is very disappointing. Many footpaths are becoming impassable due to overgrown vegetation and projects for new stiles and bridges are falling by the wayside. It is hoped that the County Council will realise the true worth of volunteers and give them the support they deserve.

The group continue to support the Air Ambulance and Mountain Rescue with donations they have collected during the Chesterfield Walking Festival. *John Graham*



This time last year we were deeply involved in preparations for our joint Walking Festival with Rotherham Metro Group. That all seems a long time ago now, but we would like to record that the Festival was a resounding success, particularly in terms of the numbers of walkers turning up for walks. It was also a triumph of co-operation between the two groups and possibly unique as we organised everything ourselves, without input from any local authority or other organisation. Huge thanks are due to all who worked so hard to make it happen.

At the beginning of this year, we worked closely with Dearne Valley Landscape Partnership, who funded the production of a thousand

leaflets to commemorate our Anniversary Walk which has been waymarked with specially produced Dearne Valley Group markers. Many thanks to John Watson for sourcing the markers and to him and Nigel for their practical skills in affixing them along the route. We are currently looking into providing maintenance of this route, which was the first walk the group ever did and which we walked again on our 20th anniversary, to ensure the group has a lasting legacy.

Yet again, Barbara Brown has co-ordinated an excellent Programme of Walks which have been very well attended. Last winter we tested a new series of short morning walks under the banner Winter Wednesday Walks. These proved to be very popular and will now be a regular monthly offering from September to April. Another new series of walks was successfully launched recently – the Chairman's Coffee & Cake Walks. These local walks, led by our Chairman, Nigel, are attracting those who want a fairly leisurely short stroll which incorporates an opportunity to purchase refreshments somewhere along the route. We recently notched up a record attendance on a Dearne Valley Group with 47 walkers attending Soo's evening walk at Conisbrough. This achievement was marked at a recent meeting by the presentation of a certificate by the Chairman and the handing over of a Champion's sash from Margaret who had held the previous record for several years.

On the social side, last Christmas saw us enjoy a wonderful dinner with disco at The Manvers Arms, Adwick on Dearne as well as a Christmas supper of Pie & Peas on our December meeting night. We plan to repeat these events this year, thanks to our excellent Social Team, Pat and Christine. In April they organised a coach trip to Whitby with two optional walks into town from Robin Hoods Bay, as part of our long time member Margaret's 80th Birthday celebrations. A super day out ended with a fish and chip supper at Scotts on the A64 where Margaret was presented with a beautiful birthday cake kindly made by our Treasurer's daughter.

An ever-present theme, alongside that of our passion for walking, continues to be our interest in food! Once again this year we have enjoyed several suppers after walks, sometimes at local restaurants, sometimes at the homes of walk leaders. On August bank holiday Sunday, we held our usual pot-luck picnic after a walk from Low Bradfield. We were thrilled to be offered hospitality for this event by one of our members, Barbara, at her home in the area. In previous years the picnic has been held on the edge of the cricket field but this year we had torrential rain throughout the day and the picnic would have been a complete wash-out without Barbara's much appreciated kindness.

Since our last report, we have seen some changes on our Committee. We have a new Area Rep and Footpaths Officer in Phil. Johnathan has taken on our Social Media streams and John Wright has joined the committee. As always, we are immensely grateful to everyone on the committee and all our walk leaders without whom the Group could not function.

Thanks to Tony and John's work on publicity and our social media presence, our membership continues to rise, having reached 139 at the time of writing. Having had a 30% increase in numbers in the last couple of years, we now need to nurture and encourage our new members so that they can grow in confidence, start to lead walks, and take the group forward.

Nigel Hebden (Chairman) & Sue Haywood (Secretary)

DONCASTER RAMBLERS

The highlight of the year has undoubtedly been the walking festival we held between 26th May and 3rd June. We organised a total of 27 walks, primarily to encourage non-walkers to walk, but also to attract new members to Doncaster Ramblers. We were delighted to be able to offer 27 walks in a nine-day period over a school holiday, in the hope that families may also be attracted to what was on offer. Volunteer leaders were numerous and enthusiastic about the event and came up with some really

interesting walks – some with a specific theme. Themes included bee and tree recognition walks, map-reading walks and several history walks. We tried to cover as many areas of the town as possible and included local nature reserves who welcomed us at no charge. Whilst most walks were significantly shorter than our normal walks we did preserve our normal programme with three longer walks in the 9-day period, including walking the Heron Way in two stages.

A very early decision was to concentrate our efforts on the population of Doncaster and not promote the walks externally. We contacted DMBC, who were delighted to assist us and produced and distributed the festival programme widely, 5,000 copies of which were printed.

There was a real buzz during the 9 days of the festival and to our delight there were no notable problems. Walk leaders were well supported by other members of Doncaster Ramblers who enjoyed the walks, alongside members of the public. The weather was fairly kind to us, with only a couple of damp walks during the week. All in all, 315 people enjoyed a festival walk, split about evenly between members and the general public. Around 150 miles of footpaths were walked in total. Although the festival took place during school holidays we failed to attract many parents with their children and although we didn't attract people completely new to walking we did attract a number of people who sometimes walk, a number of whom have become Ramblers. On the final walk, on Hatfield Moors, we were joined by local MP Caroline Flint.

The second major initiative introduced this year was to provide walks for Doncaster carers and their cared-for people. These walks are externally funded, with the carers being picked up by coach from the carers centre on Doncaster, and lunch being provided after the walks. Two walks are offered, a 'long' walk of about five miles and a short walk of a mile or so. Some people do not walk at all but enjoy the company of friends on the day out. There is a

growing awareness of how important carers are for the often unpaid work that they do.

Our first carers walk was based at Cusworth Hall and a 5-mile walk was provided. This was probably too long for some people but by the second walk, based at Chatsworth House, the long walkers were all easily able to cope with the three mile walk provided, shortened to give the walkers time to visit the Chatsworth gardens.

The committee has agreed to continue with this project in 2019 and provide monthly walks from May to October, with the exception of August. The biggest problem is choosing a venue where the non-walkers can happily spend a couple of hours. There is no doubt that the publicity from these walks will be beneficial to Doncaster Ramblers. My thanks to all the members who have supported this project.



Our maintenance teams continue to do a superb job in supporting DMBC with the installation of kissing gates, the erection of way marks, with cutting back and repairing steps and handrails. One of our members who put photos of our efforts on his Facebook account was gratified to receive many 'likes' and expressions of gratitude from local people.

Our walks programme continues to offer a wide variety of walks, both locally and in the Peak District, the Yorkshire Wolds, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, etc. We have continued to offer one

more strenuous walk per month in the summer programme, being followed by a 7-8 mile walk on the following Thursday.

Our membership has increased by 22 during the past year, halting a period of declining numbers which has gone on for a number of years. This decline is happening nationally, with people who love walking having a multitude of different groups to choose from. Nationally Ramblers has 102,818 members, a decline of nearly 2,000 in the past year and 4,500 in the past five years. This shows that our significant increase is particularly important. The reasons are not hard to find, with a dedicated publicity officer working very hard and the walking festival increased our profile locally. It's quite possible that the recently-started carers walks will further increase our profile.

David Gadd (Chair)

ROTHERHAM METRO RAMBLERS

The highlight of the year has been the re-launch of the Rotherham Ring Route. The whole project involved many of our members and we thank them all but we are particularly grateful to John Wadsworth and Sue Cresswell who brought their expertise to bear on the design and layout of the booklet. Their knowledge and skills created the final 36 page booklet of which Rotherham Metro Ramblers is justifiably proud.

Sadly, this was overshadowed by John passing away just after the Rotherham Ring Route booklet was published. He had also had been working on 12 Railway Rambles in the Peak and we were able to publish it at the beginning of September in time for him to see it. They are both a wonderful lasting legacy of his commitment to the Ramblers.

Our busiest time of the year was the re-launch of the Rotherham Ring Route. This project has been ongoing for over 3 years. It has involved many members doing an enormous amount of work. Each of the original ten sections were reviewed by small groups of

members who then plotted the individual sections. The process involved many pre-walks and checking of details before a section was considered satisfactory. Photos of various interest points were taken and suitable ones were selected.

We were pleased and privileged that the Ring Route was launched by the Mayor of Rotherham, Alan Buckley, and the Right Honourable, the Lord Blunkett and his dog Barley. They joined the walk and were able to talk with many of the members who had been involved. Lord Blunkett is President of South Yorkshire and North East Derbyshire Ramblers.

The launch was attended by over 70 people and received a lot of publicity in Rotherham and the area.



The Launch of The New Rotherham Ring Route Booklet

Kevin Burke, Countryside Manager for RMBC, said that the series of short and circular walks around the Rotherham boundary highlight the variety of countryside and historical interest we have on our doorstep.

We hope all the walks will continue to be walked for a long time in the future. Alongside the Ring Route the group has continued to carry out all its usual activities.

Another achievement in the group is that Tom and Rita Doncaster, over 15 years, have led the equivalent mileage of a return trip from John O' Groat's to Land's End with some left over. They have led a short walk in the Thorpe Hesley area every two weeks and this has been an introduction to walking for many people. We thank them for all the footsteps they have taken.

The group has seen a rise in the number of walkers wanting to walk a shorter distance and we have tried to meet this demand but unfortunately not enough leaders have been forthcoming. We continue to encourage new walk leaders to come forward. On our longer walks the poor winter weather and the advancing age of many of our leaders has had an impact on the number walking. However we maintain an average of 19 on each of our walks; this compares with 22 in previous years. Summer evening walks have proved popular.

Our membership has remained static at around 250 members with a steady flow of new walkers replacing those who leave.

The bi-monthly Social Programme continues to attract good support covering a varied range of walk related topics and other interests. The group has also enjoyed a coach ramble to Richmond involving both a long and a short walk.

The footpath volunteer programme involving our partnership with RMBC Rangers and Rotherham Rambling Club in clearing and improving pathways has continued to flourish. As well as the usual path clearing work, some more ambitious projects have been undertaken such as creating numerous flights of steps, installing kissing gates and ensuring sections of the Ring Route are fully accessible. Unfortunately there has been an extensive increase in

the amount of litter that has had to be collected. This monthly programme is well supported, with, on average, a group of 10/12 people working each day from a pool of about 30. Positive feedback continues and the volunteers' work continues to be recognised by both the local authority and by members of the local community. Our thanks to the footpath volunteer organisers, the Rights of Way team and the Countryside Rangers.

The committee wishes to thank all our members for continuing to support the work undertaken in this very active year – all contributors to the walking programme, the Ring Route, the social programme and all the other group activities that have contributed another successful year for Rotherham Metro.

We look forward to another enjoyable year of walking and socialising in 2019.

Loretta West (Group Secretary)

SHEFFIELD RAMBLERS

The group remains proactive on all matters walking. The position of chair has been vacant since last years' Annual General Meeting, but the activities of the group continue as usual. Individual members of the Executive Committee have taken on the role of 'chair' for their meetings this year.

Our group are fully supportive of the 'Sheffield Outdoor City' initiative and willingly contribute to various other events and matters related to walking in the city. We have members representing us on the 'Sheffield Walking Forum' and our members have once again contributed to the Sheffield Walking Festival that was held in September.

Our Footpath 'Fix it' team works in conjunction with the Public Rights of Way Team to carry out footpath repair work. The team have undertaken a variety of jobs including cutbacks, path widening, levelling and surfacing.

We are still successfully recruiting new members and have had some members transfer from Sheffield 20s and 30s and from Sheffield 40s groups. Despite 40 new members we have still ended the year with 24 members less than last year. The Sheffield group however is still large (560 members on the 31st August 2018) and active despite this reduction in numbers.

Our walks programme continues to offer walks on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays and some Thursdays and Saturdays. We have experienced good walking during the year, thanks to our leaders and the good weather also helped over the summer. The Rambles Committee are encouraging more members with support offered to take on the role of leaders to share the leadership load. There has been a variety of walks and some car rambles that have enabled places no longer reachable by public transport to be



accessed for walks. During the year there has also been three Sunday coach rambles visiting Saltburn, the Yorkshire Wolds, and Grassington and a Tuesday one that went to Dove Dale. This year we have had no footpath officer, but work has carried on with various members taking on some of the tasks. This has provided the opportunity to work with the other Sheffield Rambler

groups. There have been several meetings with Sheffield Rights of Way Team to discuss issues. A project titled 'Bradfield Ancient Ways Improvements' is a shared initiative that has emerged from these meetings. We are also involved with finding 'Lost Ways', possible rights of way that have been lost or stolen and a claim has now been made for a lost right of way at Moscar.

Some major changes were made to large sections of our web site and other parts of our IT system were checked and rewritten because of new privacy legislation (GDPR) that was implemented in May this year.

We look forward to another enjoyable walking year in 2019,
Val Coleman (Group Secretary)



Our current membership stands at 253, a significant increase from last year and we continue to see healthy numbers on walks and at socials.

45 different leaders led about 160 walks in the last year, mainly in the rich and varied landscape of the Peak District but also in the surrounding areas of Sheffield, Rotherham and Chesterfield and occasionally further afield. During the summer months this year we

were able to offer regular evening walks which proved very enjoyable.

The group is committed to providing a varied and extensive walks calendar. We have in place a walk mentoring programme and this year have subsidised both navigation and first aid training for walk leaders to encourage more members to lead walks.

The group continues to enjoy regular social activities and we are committed to ensuring that all tastes are catered for. We have a 'Socials and Weekends Away' Committee which meets regularly and have socials every month, ranging from meals to pub crawls, music and beer festivals and trips to the coast. Our annual midsummer 'Golden Oscars Awards Evening' recognises the sterling work of our walk leaders and is always the overall highlight of the social calendar.

Weekends away have always been at the heart of the Sheffield 40s and trips to Skye, Keswick and Dent were organised for 2018. We use a mix of group booked accommodation and encourage others to join us and make their own arrangements. Further weekends away are planned for 2019 and information about future events can be found on our website (www.s40wg.org).



A group of our members this year completed the Coast to Coast walk taking full advantage of the most glorious weather. The accounts are

healthy and no problems are anticipated for the coming year. Weekends away were successful, leaving accounts in the black. The Group continues to thrive and we look forward to another successful and enjoyable year. *Emma Myers (Secretary)*

SHEFFIELD 20s AND 30s WALKING GROUP is a group of vibrant, inclusive and sociable young people who venture out into the local countryside and Peak District each weekend, hold a host of regular social events, and organise weekends away further afield.

Whether it's the Hope Valley, Bradfield, Wortley or Matlock, we like to explore the areas on our doorstep and take time out of our busy lives to enjoy great company, fresh air and fabulous views.

Our members are from all walks of life. Globally we have people from India, Australia, Romania and Spain (to mention a few) and more locally, people from places including Hartlepool, Manchester, London and - of course - Sheffield. We are very diverse in our membership and welcome people from all backgrounds.

The socials we arrange help people get to know each other better and our calendar includes monthly meals out and pub crawls along with activities such as go-karting and abseiling. The group's annual Summer Ball and Christmas Party are also very well attended.

Sheffield 20s and 30s Walking Group plays a big part in helping people get active, both physically and mentally, and provides an opportunity for members to get away from it all while enjoying conversation with like-minded people.

Natalie Thomas (Secretary)



This last year has seen a significant increase in our membership, both in recruiting more sighted guides and visually impaired walkers. We continue with our 4 organised monthly walks throughout the year, and have some new walk leaders.

We did not have a fundraising challenge in 2018, but we did have our annual walking holiday, this year in Shropshire.

Four of our members took part in the "Blind Drive Challenge" and our member, Carol, raised over £400 in sponsorship. This money had been equally divided between our group and Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind.

Martin Wilson, a VIP member, won the blind cricketer award for the second year running and was also invited to coach V.I.P.S. both male and female of all generations in the Caribbean. They had a very successful tour, and Martin thoroughly enjoyed his adventure (for details see SVIWG.co.uk).

We have recently been approached by the Sheffield Brain Injury Rehab Unit, who have asked if we might be able to help their patients, as they might benefit from walking out with us. It is early days yet, but we have made ourselves available if they wish to join us. *David Cadet (Chair)*

AREA ACCESS ISSUES

The long hot summer did not lead to moor closures because of fire risk, which for us as walkers was very good. Areas to the west and northwest of the Peak District were not so lucky and moorland fires were a major problem.

The area of concern, which we highlighted last year, was namely CAP and the implications of it on the countryside and our access to it. To this end the Government has published:-

‘A Green future: Our 25 year plan to improve the environment’

- This plan is committed to the National Parks and AONB and it also says that when we leave the EU, the environment regulations already in place will be enshrined into UK law. It says that the very high standards now in place will be maintained (this of course is always subject to available finances).

Next year is the 70th Anniversary of the setting up of the National Parks and when the Peak district National Park came into being. Let's hope it will continue, and keep the improvements we all have achieved, such as the CROW Act in 2000.

The moors around Sheffield and South Yorkshire are managed by a consortium of different organisations, such as: PDNP, NT, RSPB, SWLT, SCC and YWA. These bodies are accountable, and as such consult with the users of the moors and countryside, so **when such consultations take place please get involved and make your feelings known so that action can be taken to resolve any grievances you may have.** Let's hope we can continue to enjoy the freedoms to roam in our wonderful moorland, and good roaming in the year to come. *Les Seaman (Area Access Officer)*

AREA REPORT OF THE AREA TREASURER

For the year ending 30th September 2018

I am pleased to present the accounts of the Area for the year ending 30th September 2018.

During the year the Area received £8,700 from Central Office and distributed £5,925 to Groups in the Area.

The Area spent approximately £1,250 during the year on administering the Area, including production of the Area News.

We paid out £10,492 from the Ivy Cowen Trust (£10,000 for 'Mend our Mountains', £200 for Dronfield Heritage Trust and £292 for Roy Cowen Memorial signpost).

The residue of the Ivy Cowen Legacy Fund (£27,217), following discussions with HO, was transferred from a restricted fund to our un-restricted General Fund.

The Area was heavily involved with the production and selling of the Clarion Call book. A re-print of 1000 books was made, costing £1,780 from the Clarion Call account. To date, the Clarion Call has cost £7 in postage, etc costs and earned £2,081 in book sales.

We paid out £480 from the Roy Cannon legacy this year for a memorial bench and signpost.

The Groups have asked the Area for approx. £5,756 funding for the coming year.

We will be contributing £1,264 from our own funds in line with The Rambler's Reserve policy towards our budget of £7,664 and will therefore be asking Head Office for £6,400, a decrease from last year.

Our thanks are due to our independent examiner, Mr Andrew Milne.

Gavin Johns (Hon. Area Treasurer)

SYNED AGM 2019

This years AGM will be hosted by Barnsley and Penistone Group at 2.00pm on Saturday, 26th January.

The venue is West Bretton Village Hall, Bretton Lane, Wakefield WF4 4LB.

There will be a 5.5mile walk around Yorkshire Sculpture Park beforehand. The walk will commence around 10.15am.

The hall will be open at 10am for toilet facilities.

Other details will be available on the website nearer the time.

SYNED Area Ramblers Secretary – *David Gadd*
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SYNED Area Ramblers Website Editor –

Christine Whittaker

**If you would like anything putting on our Area Website,
please let me know.**

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