

BRIDGE



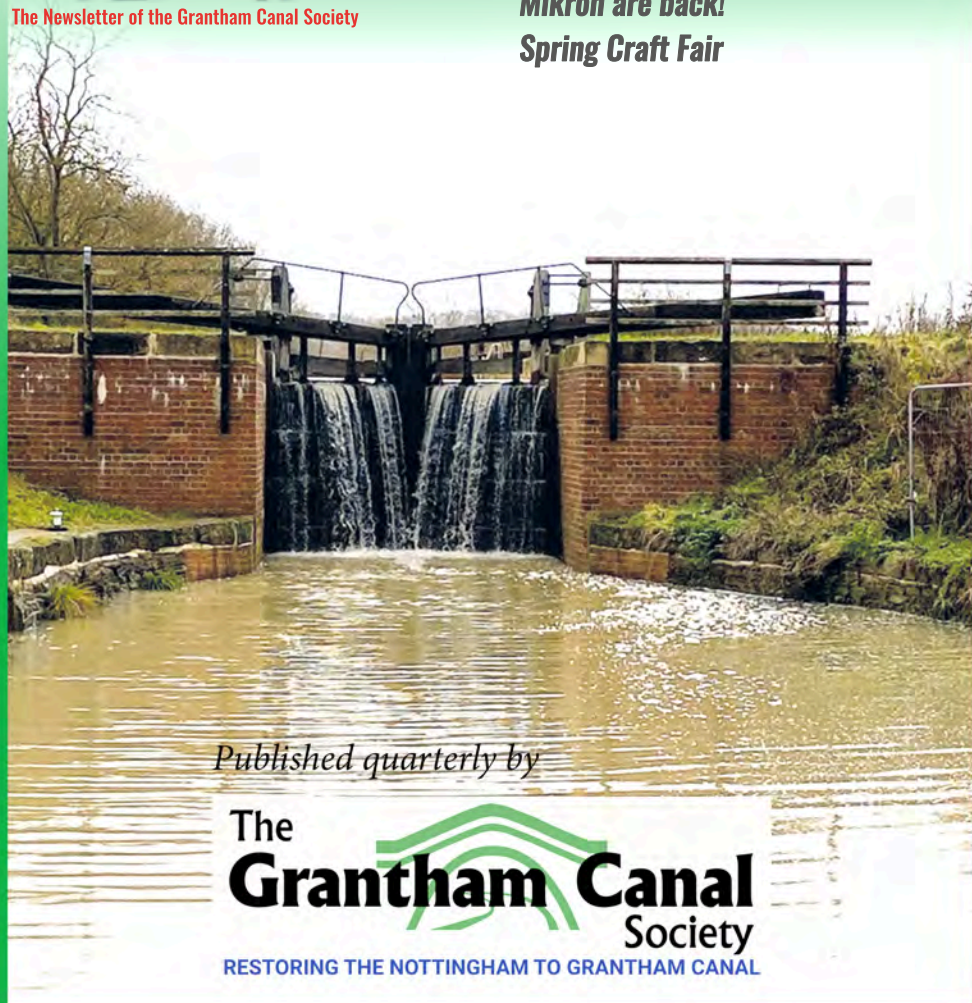
The Newsletter of the Grantham Canal Society

SPRING 24

In this issue:

*Tributes to the late Tony Jackson
Greenfields Countryside Ltd support
Mikron are back!
Spring Craft Fair*

FREE



Published quarterly by

The
Grantham Canal
Society

RESTORING THE NOTTINGHAM TO GRANTHAM CANAL

Lock 14 on a winter's day – Jim Freeman



CHAIRMAN MIKE STONE WRITES ...

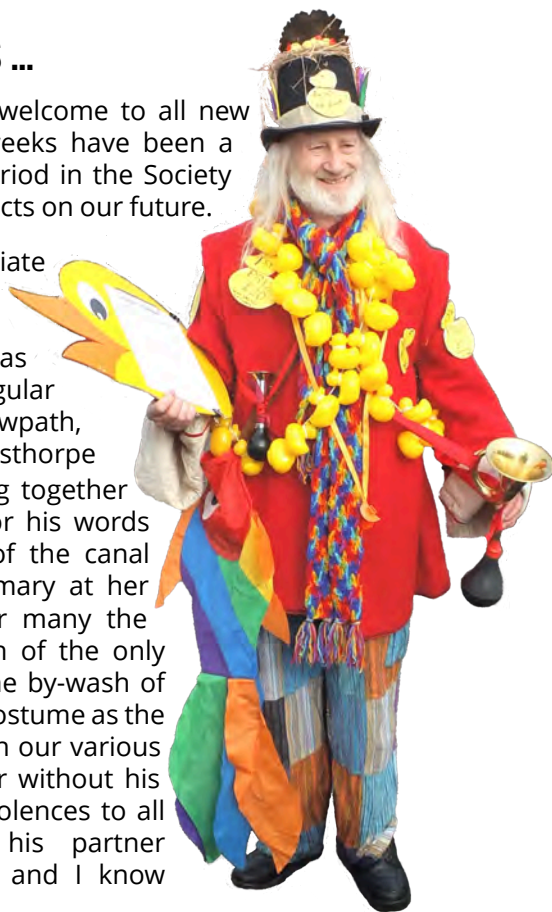
Greetings for the New Year and a welcome to all new readers of BRIDGE. The last few weeks have been a varied and emotionally-changing period in the Society with both negative and positive impacts on our future.

One that will have the most immediate impact is the passing of our dear friend and colleague **Tony Jackson**.

To many Grantham residents Tony was 'Mr Grantham Canal' and his regular presence along the eastern canal towpath, usually on his bicycle or at the Woolsthorpe depot when events were happening together with an almost daily appearance, or his words were, on social media on behalf of the canal society. Tony also supported Rosemary at her talks to local organisations but for many the lasting memory will be his creation of the only canal Duck Race held annually in the by-wash of Lock 16 and with Tony's impressive costume as the Duck Master! We will all miss Tony in our various ways and the Society will be poorer without his support. We offer our sincere condolences to all his family and particularly to his partner Rosemary. I will miss him greatly and I know others will also.

More positive news topics include: -

- The survey of a possible link to the River Trent has been completed by BWB consultancy and indications are that such a link is feasible ... but likely to cost many millions ... and so we are now seeking to have the link listed in the Rushcliffe Local Plan as a 'Protected Route'. This will require several meetings with the organisations involved including Rushcliffe BC, Nottinghamshire CC, National Highways, landowners, residents and others.
- Lock 13 stage 1 works are proceeding well and construction of the required by-wash to enable water to pass the lock whilst it is drained has commenced.
- Our weed boat, *Otter*, has been refurbished (or should that be re-built?) thanks to the engineering team at the depot who have also rebuilt our dredger *Mudlark*.



👉 p 4

FROM THE EDITOR

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Diary dates for 2024

Sun 21 Apr Spring Craft Fair

Sun 9 Jun Strawberry Cream Teas

Sat 29 Jun Greenfields sponsored
Marathon Walk along the canal

Sun 11 Aug Activities Day

Produce Fair ... tba

If you would like to help at these
events, please contact:

volunteer@granthamcanal.org

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

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Printed by Flexpress Ltd, Leicester LE4 3BY

No wise (or otherwise!) words from me in this issue, but simply I would like to echo our Chairman's words (and those of many others) regarding the passing of that great stalwart of the GCS that was Tony Jackson.

I only met Tony (and Rosemary) quite recently during the course of our mutual task of updating and re-writing the GCS Guide and also a background project – the creation of a separate publication dealing with the history of the canal (which remained firmly in the background!)

I immediately warmed to the man - maybe it was because we both looked a bit like a pair of old hippies! But seriously, I could sense that I was dealing with someone who was quite unflappable, meticulous and so very focussed that I was certain that together we would come up with a real improvement on the existing publication which was by now over 10 years old.

As a newcomer to the ins & outs, the comings & goings, etc., of the GCS – but not new to the world of the English waterways (I was a member of the IWA back in 1972!) – I felt that Tony would quickly become my 'guru' in all GCS matters ... and so it proved to be the case. As recently as November, Tony helped me out with some very helpful information regarding copyright material we need to remove from the Guide.

However since then I have made little further progress with the Guide re-write, and with the sad passing of Tony, I (along with many others) now feel quite bereft. So if any of our membership would care to offer some assistance ...



Write to me at:
bridge@granthamcanal.org
with your comments, ideas, news,
submissions, articles for inclusion, etc.

Brian Cantwell (Editor)

- The maintenance team have cleared significant lengths along the top pound towards the A1 to permit longer cruises by our trip boat *Three Shires*.
- Our first working partnership with a commercial company, since Covid, took place on the nominally dry canal recently near Cropwell Bishop when a team from Greenfields Countryside Ltd of Cropwell Bishop, supported by GCS volunteers, cleared a significant length of the canal of vegetation. The team have indicated that they wish to return after the 'bird nesting season' to continue their work. Yes please! Our thanks to the management of Greenfields Countryside for their commitment to the canal.
- Further work by residents of Lady Bay and Gamston has enhanced the appearance of the canal in the area. The Society appreciates their support and is hoping that we will soon be able to have an operational base in the area to support them.

Thanks to you, our volunteers and supported by our membership, we have a vibrant and developing organisation which is making a significant and effective contribution to the restoration of the canal from Nottingham to Grantham.

A large number of the public use the towpath for walking, cycling, running and sitting. If this is your contact with the waterway please support us by joining as members so that we can use our funds to improve the towpath you enjoy. I'm sure if you have a dog they would support you!

Enjoy the slightly early Spring this year on the Canal. Isn't nature amazing?

If you want to view the nature on the canal why not hire the *Three Shires* for your own cruise? (see our website www.granthamcanal.org)

2023 Volunteer Hours Summary													
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Total
General	817	1211	894	1244	814	984	809	1104	1238	732	898	852	11597
Skilled	334	308	387	544	525	665	757	881	705	487	422	373	6388
Professional	69	63	50	56	49	8.5	52	54	62	63	50	59	635.5
Total	1220	1582	1331	1844	1388	1657.5	1618	2039	2005	1282	1370	1284	18620.5
Individuals	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	6	6	6	
Teams	5	5	7	11	8	11	11	8	12	5	5	5	



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Nick Hardie – Hard Rock Mining Ltd


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A TRIBUTE TO TONY JACKSON

Tom Reviewer

It's with the heaviest of hearts that I have to pass on the news of the death, of Tony Jackson, my friend, The Lone Ranger. He had noted worrying health symptoms for some while which ultimately had rendered him housebound and parted from cycling by his beloved canal. It was only relatively recently diagnosed as Motor Neurone Disease which subsequently progressed far more rapidly and aggressively than was originally forecast. He died on the anniversary of his birthday.

I asked that I be the one to pass on this news since he and I have engaged in various forms of banter on the GCS FaceBook page for the last few years. It was much the same in real life as he picked up fairly quickly my preference for using a dozen words where one would normally suffice. Others are far more qualified than I to recite his lengthy list of accomplishments, not only as the stalwart and backbone of the social media sites where his chatty and informative posts drew so many of us into the watery world and along with the numerous other areas he volunteered for within the Canal Society, but also in other quarters too. The Marie Curie Society and The Grantham Dramatic Society, to name only two. He got an award for it, you know!

I'm going to try to keep this (unusually, for me) fairly short, Lone Ranger. I know you'll be wanting your supper, normally the case following our chance meetings by the canal. You, returning on yer bike with those ubiquitous bulging panniers, from a shopping trip or litter pick, late in the afternoon. On those occasions, we spent an hour or two or three, 'shooting the breeze' and putting the world to rights. The man must have loved sausages as I would frequently hear him mutter something about bangers for supper; although on subsequent reflection, it may have been bang goes my supper!

I still vividly recall our first meeting some years ago now, when I was accosted by some bloke on a bike, immediately striking me as a cross between Worzel Gummidge and Catweazle. Those of you who know him personally will understand what I mean. His interest in and wide knowledge of the canal immediately struck a spark in me and fanned the flame such that I wanted to know more, not only about the canal but the bloke as well. So started our friendship.

I could spend several more hours reminiscing while I search for a way to end this post so, Bless You, Lone Ranger, and adieu for now; unashamedly, I'm going to steal the final words that Rosemary, his partner, used when she passed on the sad news to the GCS volunteers and since it also had a special nod to me ... 'The Lone Ranger has pedalled off into the sunset'.



MIKRON THEATRE ARE COMING BACK TO HICKLING!

Friday 31st May 2024 • The Plough Inn, Hickling LE14 3AH • 7pm to 9pm

Join Mikron on a 'hill-arious' ramble through the history of land access in England, from ze Norman Conquest to loitering in lockdown, via the mass trespass at Kinder Scout.

The Pendale and District Ramblers are looking forward to celebrating 'in stile' on their 50th anniversary walk, but the path has been blocked by the landowner. How will they find their way through?

Their quest for freedom and fresh air won't be easy, as they navigate a bull, beavers, and wandering sheep.

Grab your boots and waterproof for a meander with Mikron on a hike through history.

The show will be outdoors so it's advisable to bring a chair and a blanket. Refreshments and food will be available from the pub.

A "pay what you feel" collection will be taken after the show.





PHOTOS POSTED ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



Zoe Phillips was accompanied by this swan family a few months ago while paddling on the canal



Helen Burke took this lovely photo of the canal at Tollerton taken early morning 23 February 2024

Another way to donate funds via your online shopping is to use
www.easyfundraising.org.uk



easyfundraising

with easyfundraising, you shop,
brands donate to us,
it won't cost you anything extra!

- 1 Sign up at: www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause
- 2 Search for (The Grantham Canal Society)
- 3 Your favourite brands donate to GCS

7,000+ online brands



GROUPON



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Did you know that you can "Give as you live" and donate
to the Grantham Canal Society by doing ... nothing much?

You simply buy your goods through the website
giveasyoulive.com or the app and sit back and let good
things happen!

A considerable amount has already been raised this way
for the society.

Reading this but not member of The Grantham Canal Society?

Every member we have adds to the likelihood of us gaining grant funding,
membership numbers are a great way of demonstrating the amount of our support,
so why not join us and help make a difference to our canal and preserve our heritage?
Only a small proportion of members are active volunteers, the remainder help us just by being members.
It doesn't matter if you live miles (or in some cases continents) away, you will still be supporting our efforts.

The cost is modest, annual subscription rates are:

Single Adult: £20

Family: £30.00 (Family membership covers two adults plus children living at the same address)

Under 16s / Concessions: £15

And, if you would prefer not to have to renew every year: Life Membership: £150

WORKPARTY & CONSTRUCTION UPDATE *General Manager Tony Osbond*

As I look to put together a report for the Spring Edition of Bridge I find myself again in Cornwall and looking outside the weather is anything but spring like!!

The weather has been exceptionally wet since the last edition of Bridge so water levels have been unusually high on the canal.

Operationally our teams on canal maintenance, construction, boat maintenance and machinery maintenance have been extremely busy.

Our boat and machinery teams have had *Otter* our weed boat on the slipway undergoing repairs so that come the spring and summer months it can be usefully employed keeping the incessant pond weed in check. *Otter* is now back in the water undergoing trials and *Mudlark* replaced it on the slipway with a multitude of repairs to be carried out by Jim Gaut and his team. Those repairs are well in hand and *Mudlark* is back in the water being replaced by *Three Shires* on the slipway. John Trigg and his *Three Shires* team are cleaning down and repainting the hull, the roof and part of the superstructure and carrying out repairs to the skeg and propeller.



Mudlark out of the water

The canal maintenance teams have carried out major clear-ups of vegetation and trees along sections of the canal both on the summit pound and down on sections of the canal in the Cropwell Bishop area. In addition our chain saw accredited volunteers have been busy with the construction team on Lock 13 clearing trees from the area before construction operations started. One of our volunteers Jonathan Booty offered to bring a horse down from Park Farm Horse Logging to move the tree trunks. So harking back to days gone by when



horses were common place on canal maintenance, "Donk" came down for a day and worked with our team and moved logs to the Lock 14 compound where they were then transported back to the depot.



Extract from the construction workparty report of 3rd November 2023: ... down at lock 13 the first job was to remove the covers off the clay at 14, then to dig and fix eight plastic ground supports for the safety barrier on the tow path side and concrete them in at lock 13 ...



Some of Colin's excellent aerial shots of the workparty logging operations on 15 December 2023



SELECTION OF DONATIONS RECENTLY RECEIVED					
BM	£70	JS	£90	RH	£1000
CF	£100	TB	£130	UO	£100
CS	£35	JD	£165	MN	£75
DLB	£495	MS	£115	TO	£165
JL	£90	RG	£190	JS	£165
JG	£210	JL	£90	ML	£90

Some of these donations come by way of monthly Standing Orders, while others were one-off donations - all gratefully received

We were approached by Greenfields Countryside Ltd, a local landscaping contractor to donate a day's work with their team and machinery to help with canal clearance of vegetation and trees from the canal bottom (*photo courtesy of Greenfields*).



Workparty & Construction continued

We looked at a section of the canal in the Cropwell Bishop area and selected an area from Bridge 23 Colston Lane working upstream which fulfils plans to clear repair and re-water the canal where water is very low or not at all. The tree felling and vegetation clearance would generate a lot of wood chippings so with Belvoir Riding for the Disabled sited next door they were grateful for us to deliver a copious amount of chippings to use with horse stabling. During the day we had a visit from Ruth Edwards the local MP for the Rushcliffe Constituency that covers the area we were working in. During her visit she chatted with volunteers discussing their experiences of getting involved in bringing heritage schemes back to life.

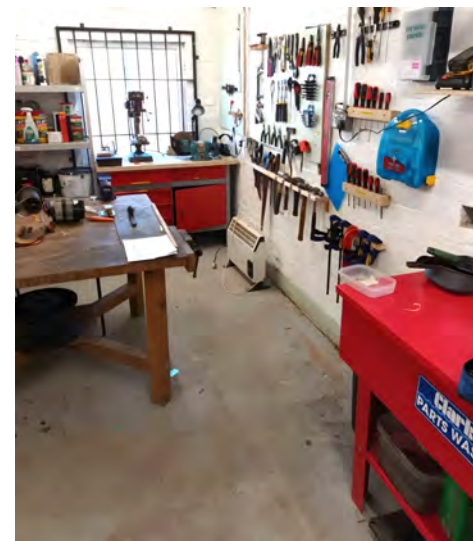
Developing relationships with local companies is very important to GCS as additional help in achieving the eventual restoration of the canal is our long-term aim.

The day was very successful with two dozen GCS volunteers and Greenfields staff working tirelessly but achieving a remarkable section of clearance so a big thank you to Greenfields who have already said that they will donate further days and have allocated already a day in October to return and carry on the clearance towards Spencers Bridge 24.

The exercise of tree clearance has led to us buying a log splitter where we are now storing logs to be dried out for sale in the next 12 months. We will have conditions to follow in this exercise in getting accreditation, but we see an opportunity to get additional funding into GCS.



The workshop has been completely reorganised by Nick Murphy working with Jim Gaut and you can now find most things without hunting through a plethora of tools and equipment.



Nick has declared the workshop sort out complete!

Construction work on Lock 13 has started with vegetation and tree clearance and the re-siting of the top dam being carried out and the completion of the new access road. The temporary bye-wash is now going in with the upstream permanent bye-wash arrangement to be constructed.

Temporary propping of the lock walls is now in the design stage as is the anchor system to tie the walls back as ground anchors should they be needed. Once the temporary bye-wash becomes operational and the bottom dam is installed then the lock chamber can be pumped out and de-silted to expose the lock floor. We will then be able to determine the complete restoration work needed to bring the lock into working order.

The work to Lock 18 paddle gear replacement is in abeyance waiting for CRT to come back on the replacement paddles for the top letter boxes. A decision from CRT is also awaited on the supply of replacement balance beams to the bottom gates on Lock 18. We have supporting timber work in stock for the paddle gear.

We still have a problem with water leaking into the adjacent field towpath side despite the repointing we have done. Further investigation work needed.

Work to the repairs of Culvert 12 is in abeyance, CRT have still to complete the designs but at a meeting with landowners Belvoir Estates, because of cereal

Workparty & Construction continued

crops already planted then access across their land on the offside would not be permitted until after the summer harvest. So this would mean a start on site in August this year.

It should be noted that in the Lady Bay/Gamston area the action group WeBCan have carried out a considerable amount of work in clearing reeds from the bed of the canal. The canal is looking a lot better for their efforts, disposal of the reeds arranged by GCS for CRT to remove.

The feasibility study for the Trent Connection is completed and has determined that the route we are looking at presents no infrastructure problems. Further meetings with Notts County Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council are now being arranged to present the findings of the study to get a protected route established. Consultations with National Highways are on-going as well as meetings with the housing developers Vistry – the main developer involved in the Tollerton Lane housing scheme.

We still await news from CRT on the removal of *Corvus* from the Depot. The boat will be subject to an online auction being arranged by CRT. It is hoped that by the end of March all the formalities will have been completed and *Corvus* will have gone to 'pastures new'.

Finally, we have a Broadband connection into the depot. Not very fast but acceptable.

Logs, logs and even more logs!



THREE SHIRES TRIP BOAT

Elizabeth Bland

The last few weeks have seen the Three Shires trip boat once again out of the water and on the Woolsthorpe Depot slipway for her annual programme of cleaning, repainting and maintenance in readiness for the 2024 season.

As she entered the slipway and the hull came into view, we could see we had a big job on our hands to get the Three Shires cleaned up and repainted. In addition to work on the hull, we have also repainted the roof, the gunwales and the stern.



Internally, a deep clean has been carried out followed by repainting. As you can see from the second image (opposite), with the help of nine dedicated volunteers, we are on target to be ship-shape for the start of the season, which is on Mother's Day, 10th March.



We will be starting the season with our popular 30-minute trips, which are scheduled to take place on Bank Holidays and designated weekends throughout the year – please see our website (granthamcanal.org) for details.

In addition to the short trips, passengers can hire the Three Shires for longer, more leisurely cruises along the canal – opting for two, three or four hour trips. These can be booked on any day of the week and we encourage passengers to bring their own picnics to enjoy along the way. The boat is hired exclusively for your group so this is an ideal way to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries or a day out with friends or family. Again – visit our website for details and how to book.

We are looking forward to a busy season, and we are always looking for additional crew members to join our team. Full training is provided so you don't need crewing experience – so if you would like to join the team please email boatmaster@granthamcanal.org.

IWA CANALWAY CAVALCADE

4th - 6th May 2024 | Little Venice, London

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#Trending

with Nikyla Manners

 @granthamcanalsociety  @granthamcanal  @granthamcanalsociety

It is only fitting that this edition of Trending celebrates the work of our dear friend Tony Jackson.

If you follow us on Facebook (and if not, why not!), you will be very familiar with Tony's unique ability to spin a yarn, and his unmatched knowledge of the history of the Grantham Canal. Tony loved discovering an old photo or story and would delve down a rabbit hole to uncover everything he could. Those of you who have been around a while will remember him as 'Ay Up Me Duck' at Discovery Days and as a canalman at educational events with his partner Rosemary.

His Facebook posts appealing for members and volunteers are the reason many of us are involved today, and we are eternally grateful for his huge contribution to the Grantham Canal Society. Unsurprisingly, he asked for donations to the Society in his memory. If you wish to donate visit www.granthamcanal.org/donate and reference Tony J.

I'll leave you with one of Tony's recent updates, full of the humour we will remember him for:

Storms and flooding blew a hole in plans, but volunteers have still been coming in, but concentrating on 'domestic duties' around the

depot – sorting and organising – so they can find stuff when they need it.

Never again will we hear the cry "anybody seen the ..." I wish ...

Sometimes, construction seems to be more about getting stuff to the site, moving it around on site, clearing it off the site and putting it away afterwards.

So if you've often thought about volunteering but don't know your stretchers from your headers (bricklaying talk), doesn't matter – we need you just to keep moving stuff around:
volunteer@granthamcanal.org





The
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