

BEMSEE

FEBRUARY



1909 1969

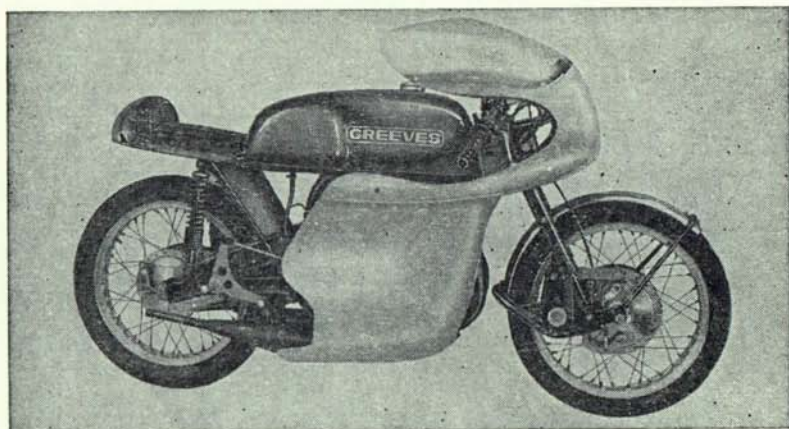


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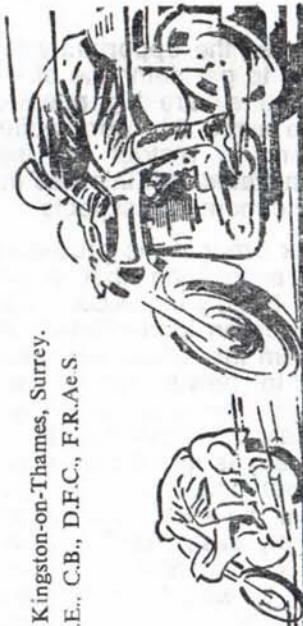
THE JOURNAL OF THE
BRITISH MOTOR CYCLE RACING CLUB

Bemsee

EDITORIAL

WHAT'S the world coming to? The exorbitant increase in the price of entrant's licences to £5 is nothing short of a disgrace to the sport. From a basic problem of ensuring who is a bona fide entrant and who isn't, one now has a situation whereby the genuine entrants have to pay for those who try and get something for nothing. Or perhaps there was really no problem in the first place! Let's look at the situation.

In days gone past—long since past—an entrant was more often than not, a sponsor as well. He was the one who not only paid for the machines, paid for the expenses, paid for the entries but also was a guiding influence in the sport. Well liked, well respected and with the sport really and truly at heart. Times have changed, and many of the so called entrants are now just out for publicity and for a bit of fun. The Ecurie skints, down-and-outs and what-have-you which appear all too frequently these



days are a combination of two things: the opportunity to overcome the substitution rules and . . . to get someone else in for nothing. Perhaps they also believe they are big people. The cheap price of an entrant's licence made this worthwhile. But did the increase in the cost intend to restrict the issue of unsupportable licences? It has been stated that this was the sole object and the decision wasn't on the monetary aspects.

Chas Wilkinson of Cadwell Park brought the problem to the attention of the A.C.U. with the suggestion that a possible increase in fees might overcome it. Blindly the A.C.U. appear to have blundered on and accepted such an idea without thinking much further. But is it not a problem that could well be solved by the organiser? After all he ought to know his genuine entrants by now and be able to differentiate between one and the other. I suppose it could be awkward when he knows that an entrant is simply a fiddle, but then the remedy is in his own hands and he can easily refuse passes without penalising everyone else who are doing nothing but good for the sport. On the whole it doesn't make much difference in any case. There are still not that many entrants on the fiddle as to make any difference to the paying gate. Discretion has a lot to be said for it and, perhaps, a lot more would have been said for the A.C.U. if they had used a bit of it on this question.

JHS

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ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS TO THE 1969 A.C.U. PROVISIONAL FIXTURE LIST

Add

8.3.69	N	Cheshire Centre	Oulton Park Road Races
20.4.69	N	East Midland Centre	Alton Towers Road Races
3.5.69	CR	Waterloo & D.M.C.	Aintree Road Races
17.5.69	R	Cheshire Centre	ACU Clubmans Road Races (Oulton Park)
18.5.69	RR	South Liverpool M.C.	Reliance Trial
5.7.69	CR	Waterloo & D.M.C.	Aintree Road Races
6.7.69	N	East Midland Centre	Mallory Park Road Races
10/11/12.			
7.69	I	P.Z.M.	F.I.M. Rally (Cracow)
30/31.			
8.69	I	A.M.S.J.	Grand Prix Adriatique
13.9.69	I	Speedway Control Board	World Speedway Individual Championship Final (Wembley)
28.9.69	N	East Midland Centre	Alton Towers Road Races
19.10.69	RR	Shaw & D.M.C.	Bradford Trophy Trial (NW/Y/CH)

Delete

14.6.69	N	Middlesbrough & D.M.C.	Croft Road Races
5.10.69	N	Louth & D.M.C.	Lincs Grand National Scramble

Alterations

From 29th March (N) Pathfinders & To 6th September Derby M.C.	Bemrose Trophy Trial
From 3rd May (I) K.N.M.V. To 18th May	Dutch 500 c.c. Moto Cross Grand Prix
From 15th May (I) O.M.K. To 18th May	West German 250 c.c. Moto Cross Grand Prix
From 26th May (N) Lyn & D.M.C. To 25th May	Lyn Traders Trophy Trial
From 8th June (N) Bristol M.C. & L.C.C. To 15th June	British Grass Track Drivers Championships—Preliminary Round
3.6.69 (I) F.M.B.	Should read— 500 c.c. Moto Cross Grand Prix and not 250 c.c. Moto Cross Grand Prix
From 21st June (C) B.M.C.R.C. To 28th June	Brands Hatch Road Races
From 12th July (N) Middlesbrough & To 6th September D.M.C.	Croft Road Races
From 6th December (N) Bath & West of To 7th December England M.C.	Knut Trophy Trial

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that bikes been revved, but not by me,
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Even to Dave the silly old fool,
You sold your bike for a reasonable price
and bought a 'Cortina' which you think is nice.
Alas your dream world will certainly crumble
For driving a 'Cortina' must make you feel humble.
Return to racing, it's not too late,
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PERHAPS, IF AND WHEN

Jim Swift

THE mind boggled at the prospects of a Grand Prix circuit in London. Even more so when the publicised venue was the Crystal Palace. But such a scheme was the talking point even as recently as January.

Even though one hoped for a miracle, it was obvious that this would never come about. I've seen the plans even, but the public antipathy towards the present noise element at London's own southern circuit would dampen schemes before even becoming realistic. Even so, we sat around a table and discussed possible future plans for the Crystal Palace circuit with such eminent people as the G.L.C., represented by their architects, their surveyors and people whose positions really didn't describe what they were, nor did their occupations relate to the department they represented . . . or so it seemed to me.

I suppose the Grand Prix idea was scotched by us, rather than by beaurocracy, for it was obvious that the circuit could still only be used five times a year. The cost factor was insurmountable. Although the court restriction on the Palace runs out next year, the powers that be still only intend restricted use so as not to antagonise the local inhabitants into superintending another one.

As every sportsman knows, the Crystal Palace is fast becoming the hive of athletic activity that has been the long felt want of the athletic brigade for as long as I can remember. It boasts only the second Olympic sized pool in England and sports a running track and facilities which athletes generally are not used to in this dramatic country of ours. Small wonder therefore, that motor racing is simply coincident with the recreation centre, for it is a fact that if either one of them had to be dispensed with, motor racing would be the immediate sufferer. Indeed, the reason why the parking facilities in the paddock are so good, is simply because the paddock acts as a car park for the sports centre.

The motor racing circuit itself was discussed at length. We were asked what improvements we would envisage. Of course, these were lengthy and varied but are all dependant upon the amount of money that might eventually become available for such purposes. There is no guarantee that anything will be done to remove the obvious hazard to riders, that of removing the sleepers for, as the R.A.C. rightly remarked, they are necessary for crowd protection at car meetings. Those ghastly sleepers at Paddock Hill at Brands are a constant reminder that they are considered mandatory at four wheeled events. It would be difficult to add any personal comment upon this state of affairs as one is unlikely to alter it in any way. Even the A.C.U. are unable to instill any sense of urgency into the problem, although not for the want of trying.

The drainage of the circuit was considered a basic priority both from the top straight and from other parts of the circuit including the glade. From henceforth you may well find that North Tower corner has been widened and the outside banking cut back to allow for protection of the sleepers but this is pure conjecture. There may also eventually be a bridge or a tunnel across or under the circuit to allow for easier access. Perhaps, may, if, sometime . . . when the money becomes available.

I won't say that I felt despondent but just that I wondered if the morning had achieved anything constructive. Perhaps a more basic understanding had been agreed and, perhaps, we may well see the fruition of some of the ideas. One never knows with the G.L.C. They are likely to build a G.P. circuit if there is some political reasoning behind it so we can but sit back, ignore the rumours and wait and see.

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1969 Fixture Lists

AGAIN this year, Motor Cycle fixture lists will be circulated to all Bemsee members free of charge. They will not be included with the magazine because of their size but will be sent separately through the post.

Wanted — A Good Reporter to give a two page write-up on Bemsee Club meetings for this journal. Think you can do it?

Missed a set of regs.? Then send in for back copies for 1969 race meetings at Brands Hatch and Snetterton.

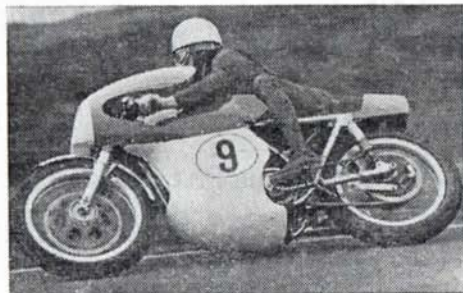
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OF PEOPLE AND FRIENDS

Ted "Cabby" Cooper. He's done it again. On their last jaunt across to India, Arthur Wheeler remarked that "he's crazy."

Well, just to prove it Cabby is now in Australia having driven there in his Land Rover via India and Perth. At his age one wonders where all the energy comes from. He relates that the only mishap so far was the 18" boulder he hit in Persia which buckled both offside wheels. And yet the tyres were in perfect condition—"good old Dunlops." The last letter we received from him was from Sydney after Christmas. He said that he'd had a wonderful time in India; was welcomed in Ceylon by the Ceylon Motor Cycle Racing Club and had hoped for a rest on the Chusan, the boat which was taking all the rally drivers across to Australia. Unfortunately this wasn't to be because he bumped into Jimmy Simpson and the boat trip turned out to be as chaotic as his stay in India. By the time you read this Cabby will be in New Zealand with **Rod Coleman** and will be at the New Zealand Grand Prix at Auckland where he will stay with **Len Perry**. Cabby hopes to be back at Southampton on March 10th returning via Tahiti, Panama, Bermuda and Miami.

Fred White. While talking about Australia, reminds me that our ex-river policeman Fred White is enjoying himself in his new home at Eden Hills, outside Sydney. Fred has opened a garage with the 'crossed jacks' prominently displayed. He comments that it seems to be well-known in Australia which, I suppose, isn't very surprising when you come to think of it. He misses the scene back home as his nearest circuit is 30 miles from Adelaide called Mullala. "The lads are extremely keen but haven't a great idea of things though one or two of them are really good. I find the marshalling leaves a lot to be desired but perhaps I am a little critical—one does notice these things. I went to a S.A. State scramble in 1967. This was really frightening. Again hardly any marshals and those that were there had very little idea of what they were there for. The worst part was the spectators standing on the track while the racing was on. In most parts the course wasn't even roped off so you can see how we pine for some real motor cycling."

Fred wants to know if anyone knows the whereabouts of **Derek Daykin** who went out to Australia before him and who he hasn't heard from since. Also we had a plea from Fred to trace **Dick Wyler**. As far as I know he's now in Italy.

Dennis Bates. Dennis telephoned me recently to say that he was in hospital with a broken cheek bone after hitting a pedestrian with his Honda. I gather the air was blue for a time. Bemsee again came to the rescue in the form of Brian Ashton—London Bobby and travelling marshal—who helped solve the obvious problems before they came to fruition. The pedestrian admitted liability.

Gordon Hadfield. After 21 years as Chief Medical Officer, Gordon comments that he could do with a rest. He is firm in the conviction that the only reason he was made vice-president was to keep him on. He's not quite right but we would all be sorry if we didn't, in some small way, reward his great service to the Club. A really first class medical officer is an asset at any race meeting as any rider will tell you, so we sincerely hope that we will see him around when his valuable time permits. Arthur Wheeler told me some time back of the occasions when Gordon used to help out in the shop when he was a mere student. There used to be some fun in those days!

John Surtees, I hear, has designed a car for the new Formula 5000 inaugurated by Motor Circuit Developments to instill some interest into the motor racing world. The new saloon engines are being dropped into formula 1 body shells—mostly Chevrolet engines I fear—with a view to increasing the potential of good spectator appeal. I also hear that the accepted 'star' drivers are being banned from this form of racing. Although John's recent racing successes have been marred by unreliability, let us all hope that we shall see him flash to the front now that he has left Honda.

Eric Oliver, that wily and brilliant sidecar champion of the post war era whose stories of the battles with the Gileras are now an accepted excuse to get him talking, is joining Bemsee' scrutiny brigade, albeit for a short while this year. Eric has sold his business at Staines and now intends to enjoy himself this year with a Summer cruise, a trip to Sweden and to the T.T. which he doesn't intend to miss.

Joe Dunphy tells me that his Ferodo brake lining service is really thriving now. Before the season gets underway he expects to have hundreds of wheels to do which are being sent to him from all over the country. So if you want your shoes re-lined and skimmed to drum size remember that Joe is now operating the official Ferodo service from his premises at Sydenham. It will help him too if you can deliver and collect.

While we are obviously dwelling in the 'past' this month I should mention that our old friend, **Harry Mack**, now in his eighties, is still a taker of the Club magazine. Perhaps his old friends who he hasn't heard of for years might like to drop him a line c/o the office.

Ken Hampton has moved and he has asked me to pass on to his many friends and 'enemies' his new address: Flat C, 7 Radnor Park West, Folkestone, Kent.

George Pledger erstwhile Circuit Manager at Snetterton has transferred to Mallory Park where he has taken over from Jack Walton. We wish him all the luck and hope that someday we may be customers again.

For those of you still interested in the B.R.D.C. and Silverstone Circuit, you might like to know that **Jimmy Brown** is now no longer circuit manager. He has taken over the full control of the farm on the circuit and another circuit manager has been appointed in his place. Whereas, **John Eason Gibson** has retired from the B.R.D.C. as Secretary, his son Neil now enjoys a job as events manager at the R.A.C.

JHS

TALES OF SILVERSTONE

Jim Swift

IF you had to give examples of the coldest and wettest circuits in the country I don't doubt that the word Silverstone would rush to your lips. Perhaps I knew it better than most for, apart from my association with the Club from 1955 first as a messenger boy, progressing through the many varied tasks until the time when I was employed as Assistant Secretary in 1959, I spent a miserably cold year there in 1963 as a so-called assistant to the circuit manager, Jimmy Brown. We didn't entirely see eye to eye but thereby hangs another tale.

For those of you that have never had the privilege of racing at Silverstone, let me remind you that it consists of two circuits, namely Club Circuit and Grand Prix Circuit, the latter stretching to almost three miles. The Club circuit forms part of the Grand Prix circuit but straight-lines two corners from Becketts to Woodcote presenting a flat out blind where you can well and truly wring its neck off—"it" being the 'bike of course. But the wonderful part about Silverstone was that, despite the weather, it was about the finest circuit in the country for motor cycle racing. The surface was as near perfect as you could imagine

and there were ample places where one could wind the throttle open with the knowledge that everyone else would be doing the same. It was the sort of circuit you wanted to race on; even though the paddock was a might too small for the numbers that we catered for, everyone enjoyed themselves enormously and the tales of Silverstone could be told ad infinitum. I suppose it depends which way you look at it, but to me it was like a long wanted holiday, an enjoyable job in enjoyable surroundings.

My first meeting at Silverstone was a Silverstone Saturday event way back in 1955. Don't ask me to recall that meeting for it has been dulled by so much happening since. I can't even remember whether it was hot or cold, just that the timekeeper's box was an old double-decker bus which swayed unmercifully when I rushed up the stairs too quickly. This caused much panic with the timekeepers and I think I was as popular then as I am now. That old bus heard more words which one finds listed as colloquial English, than not; even more so if it was raining at the time because the outside of the windows couldn't be kept clear. It almost broke its spine every time the wind blew and only the free bottles of Lucozade which used to be delivered to the circuit kept the temperature down to reasonable limits inside. Should it not, the windows steamed up.

I can also recall operating from a caravan parked near the bridge. It was by far too small but at least ensured that you dealt with one person at a time! I suppose that my next recollection was of running up and down the commentary tower with the results and information for the announcers and B.B.C./I.T.V. commentators. This was when I first met Graham Walker—what a marvellous man he was. You might think the operation simple enough but the tower was of quite some height and to get to the top meant clambering up three separate ladders of maximum length through a gap in the scaffolding. It was easy going up but coming down was a different kettle of fish entirely. I can remember that I always used to stay up there until I had to come down for the next collection but perhaps this was because I couldn't cross the track until it was clear and I decided to watch the racing from the best vantage spot.

There was always something to be doing at Silverstone. It was never the commercialised circuit that they all are today. If you wanted cover for the programme sellers, first-aid and police, tents had to be ordered and erected and you were forever flying around to make sure they went up in the right places. Car parking had to be organised, admission tickets printed and distributed

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and TED MACAULEY

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CASSELL



and many other things that one takes for granted when hiring a circuit today. We originally camped in a caravan in the paddock which meant that life was quite leisurely and my most vivid recollections are of scorching hot days when one wandered around the many chores in just shorts and slippers. Why I can't remember, but we used to put down white lampshades on all corners to give easier visibility to riders. I once asked Ned Minihan what he thought of them and since that time I don't believe we have ever bothered. I know they used to be quite a mess at the end of the day when, of course, they had to be cleared away. Surely everyone must have thought us completely mad.

Telephones had to be installed at each and every meeting for the use of marshals and the like so the few days before a meeting used to be extremely enjoyable, meeting old faces and swapping yarns since we last met. The International events were a revelation in themselves. Quite some party in fact because you could always reckon on the Commonwealth and Continental riders turning up a few days before. I shall never forget the race we all had on Honda monkey-bikes. If memory serves me correctly there were Bertie Schneider (later a works Suzuki rider), Ladislaus Richter, Siegfried Lohmann and a few others. Lohmann fell off before he realised that the tyres were square! He also fell off his Adler in the race itself I recall! There was no winner because everyone was in hysterics, and the day was quite a gusty one. It was no good trying to ride into the wind on Hanger straight because the bikes just came to a standstill. If Honda had only known the use to which those bikes were put!

It's strange that you can only ever remember the enjoyable or the funny aspects. I know full well there were some terrible moments but these are almost blotched out by the good times. There was the time when we had to recover a pair of pink ladies underpants from the flagpole on the top of the grandstand. I have a feeling that Dave Alcock and Chris Williams were the culprits but this was never proved. Guy Tremlett, the then Secretary, always used to write in the magazine under the title of Double Knockers Briefs, and I think this action was particularly for his benefit. Try as we might we never discovered who they belonged to either!

But the year of 1963 I can remember like yesterday. I joined the British Racing Drivers Club in the November of 1962 and used to stay in Silverstone village itself in a house that Bill Lacy now owns. It was one of the worst winters I can remember. Certainly we spent more time on the farm digging pigs out from under the snow, trying to defrost the water carriers and the like than we ever did on the circuit. We frequently got tractors stuck in snow drifts and I can well recall Jimmy Brown enjoying himself on a natural skid pan in one of them. The snow and ice which cancelled a many Bemsee practice day at Silverstone was rife. The road to the circuit was completely blocked for about two weeks with drifts up to six and eight feet in height. Silverstone was one mass of snow. But it cleared and although we expected to have to resurface many parts of the circuit it was found to be unnecessary. The rain came and filled the ditches, the one round the outside of Woodcote accounting for many unsuspecting riders and drivers. Indeed two Northampton based riders ended up in it after having dropped their shining new Triumphs during a pre-meeting test day. It's a pity I can't remember who they were!

An unheard of hazard at Silverstone to me was the grass dryer. I used to take my turn on ambulance duty during practice sessions on the big circuit opposite the farm. In mid summer I could never stop sneezing, and I have since discovered quite a number of riders who used to fly past the farm as quicky as possible holding their breath! I think I must hold the lap record at Silverstone for the ambulances, because I always seemed to be short of time to close the circuit. I blotted my copy book one day. I was flat out around Stowe Corner when I almost ran into Jimmy Brown's mini. The brakes were pretty useless so I couldn't stop but I heard about it afterwards though. If he ever wondered how the paint came to be missing on the nearside I can tell him.

But times seemed to change rapidly from 1964, or perhaps it was I that changed. We started to run more meetings when I returned as Secretary of Bemsee and the leisure hours disappeared entirely. Perhaps I was more conscious that time had literally been wasted, enjoyable though it had all been. From that time until we parted company with Silverstone some two or more years later I can recall only one humerous instance—that

of claiming diplomatic immunity when returning some flags we had borrowed from London embassies. We made the mistake of hoisting them on top of the paddock scoreboard for International practice. Overnight a fierce wind sprung up and the ten foot square flags ended up a third of the size in absolute tatters.

The only racing machines that Silverstone hears these days are the ones which appear there from time to time in the hands of private owners and testers. I have fond memories of Silverstone for the atmosphere of a meeting was created by the humour and fun of the riders and officials. Silverstone was an ideal setting for it. Perhaps the layout was primitive by today's standards and perhaps the atmosphere was encouraged rather than discouraged as it seems to be today. There doesn't seem to be as much fun either because everyone is so business minded and lacks time. Perhaps this is why I yearn to be back there again, to suffer the snow, the hail, the sleet, the rain and the wind. I wonder—perhaps I would find a lot of difference now?



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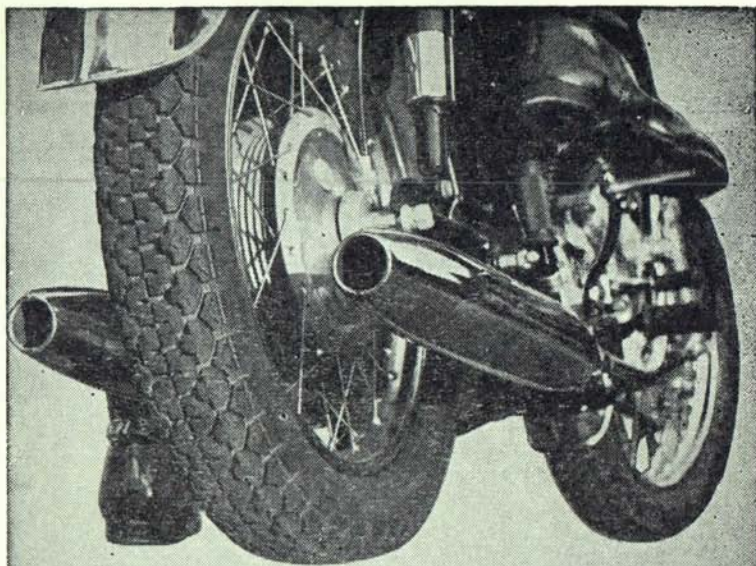
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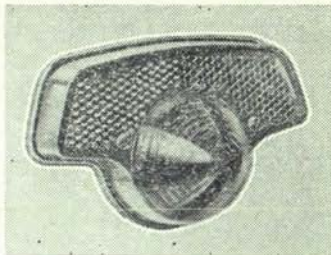
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