

Newsletter of the

TOWNSVILLE MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

October 2019

1/27 Barbeler Street Currajong Q 4812

PO Box 785 Hyde Park Q 4812



Special Points of Interest:

- *The Story of Edward John Eyre*
- *Nick's memoirs*
- *Recent Acquisition*

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The 1st of January, 2020 marked the start of another decade and it only seems yesterday when we welcomed in 2000 and here it is 20 years on and so much has happened in that time. The Museum moved from the city in 2002 to our present location in Barbeler Street, Currajong but I must say there has been so much work completed at the Museum in those 20 years. The history of Townsville Museum over its first 30 years from 1985 to 2015 has been written by Geoff Hansen. The book is titled "*Keeping our Heritage*". It is a credit to Geoff and I sincerely thank him for all his work and also to Lyn Hansen for her patience. Later this year the reprinting of a previous book will be released titled "*Townsville in War and Peace – the 75th Anniversary*" edition marking the end of the Second World War. This book will have additional stories which were not in the original book. Our most successful book, "*Goldfields that made Townsville*" sold out and we have now done a reprint of the book.

Since our last Newsletter I must report that John McDonald is recovering from his illness, although not back on deck as yet. We look forward to your return soon John – the girls miss you on Wednesdays. Ray Plozza has been in contact and is due to have his other eye operation and hopes to also return in the early part of the year. We also wish Michele Pylant a speedy recovery.

There has been some changes inside the Museum with upgrades to window coverings behind displays in Hall 1 and some re-arrangements of displays. Special "thanks" to Gary Mann, Warren Jones and his friend Robert who did the upgrade. A new cabinet for the Book Binding display is in place and the Cowboys T-Shirt has been placed above the trophies display in Hall 2. The corner display of early Railway photos has also been upgraded and a small display of railway equipment has been added, thanks to Nick Shailer. Before the Christmas break we changed the ladies dress display with a 1960's evening dress and a 1970's dress. We also added a new display of Handbags from the Eileen Minehan collection – *gee that lady really loved her handbags*.

2020 I think is going to be another successful year for the Museum even though there is no good news about a relocation. We are however looking for some more volunteers, so if you know of any friend, relative or neighbour who would like to volunteer and be part of a great team, call our Secretary Sue to arrange a time to meet.

Regards to you all,

Trish Cronin
President

Monthly committee meetings are held at the Museum on the third Monday of the month at ten o'clock. All committee members are notified a week prior to the meeting.



Horn & Peterson's workroom from around the early 1900s. Postcard from TM&HS Collection

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TOWNSVILLE MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday to Friday

9:00 am to 2:30 pm

First and Third Sundays of the month

1:30 pm to 3:30 pm

ENTRY Adults \$2 Chn 50c

MEMBERSHIP FEES

(12 months from 1st July to 30th June)

Single \$ 11.00

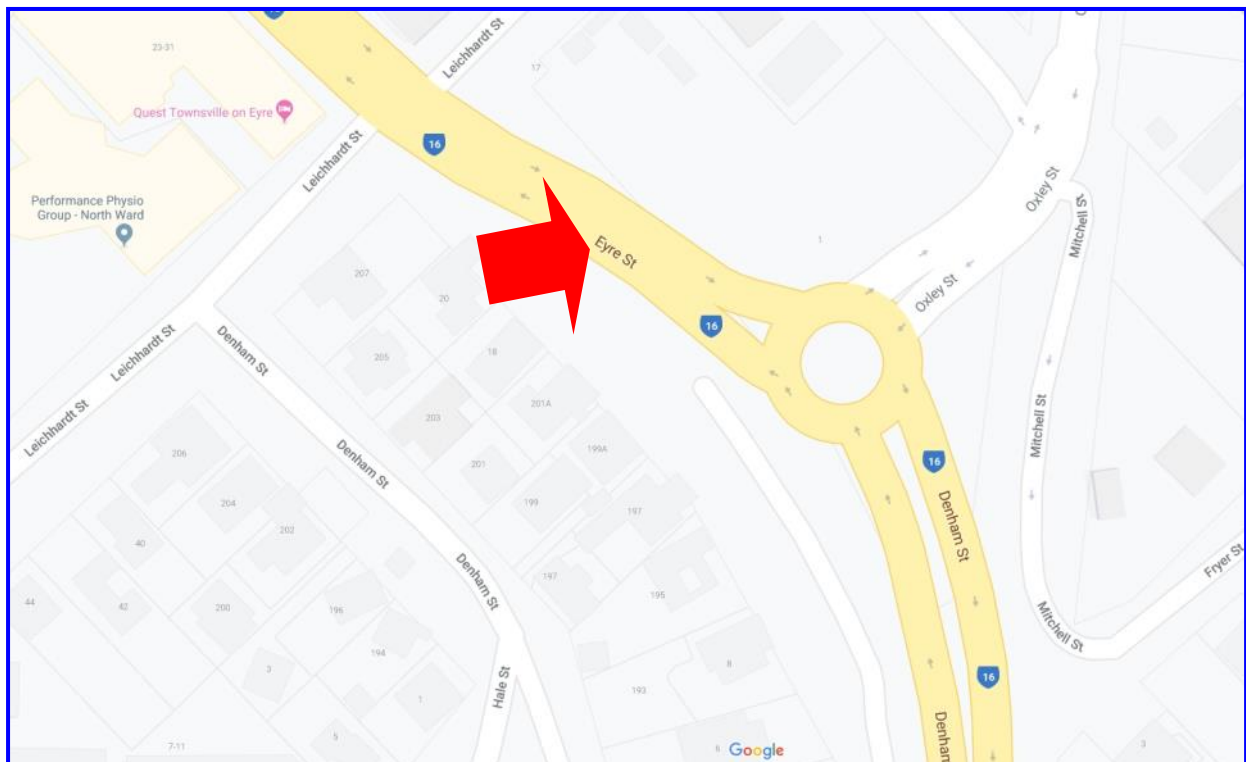
Couples \$ 16.50

Corporate \$ 32.50

EYRE STREET

Eyre street, North Ward. Named after Edward John Eyre, explorer, best remembered for his trek around the Great Australian Bight in 1840-41.

Mathew, J. (1995). *Highways and Byways*. Townsville, Queensland: Townsville City Council.



Below is an excerpt from the Australian Dictionary of Biographies on Edward John Eyre

Eyre, Edward John (1815–1901)

by Geoffrey Dutton

This article was published in Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 1, (MUP), 1966

Edward John Eyre (1815-1901), explorer and governor, was born on 5 August 1815 at Whipsnade, Bedfordshire, England, third son of Anthony William Eyre, vicar of Hornsea and Long Riston, and his wife Sarah, née Mapleton. He was educated at schools near Rotherham and Grantham, at Louth, and at Sedbergh. He had intended to enter the army, but at 17, at his father's suggestion, he used the purchase money to emigrate to Australia.

In the Ellen he arrived in Sydney on 20 March 1833. Finding no prospects in Sydney, he moved to the Hunter River district where, through the good offices of Colonel Henry Dumaresq, arrangements were made for Eyre to live with William Bell at Cheshunt Park to gain colonial experience in sheep and cattle management, and in July he bought a flock of 400 sheep.

EDWARD JOHN EYRE—DICTIONARY OF BIOGRAPHY ENTRY

In 1834 he took up 1260 acres (510 ha) at Molonglo Plains, near Queanbeyan; in 1835, in partnership with Robert Campbell, he overlanded 3000 sheep from Liverpool Plains to Molonglo. After difficulties with diseased sheep Eyre arranged to dispose of his Molonglo property, Woodlands, and in January 1837 went to Sydney, where he met Charles Sturt, and raised money to overland stock to Port Phillip. Using Woodlands as a depot, he assembled 78 cattle, 414 sheep, oxen and horses and on 1 April set out, arriving on 2 August in Melbourne where he sold his stock at a good profit. By October he was back in Sydney, 'most anxious to be the first to arrive in South Australia overland from Sydney'; he assembled an expedition and 300 cattle at Limestone Plains, and set out for Adelaide on 3 January 1838. On 15 January he was joined by his overseer, John Baxter, later his companion on exploring expeditions. Eyre followed (Sir) Thomas Mitchell's route to the Wimmera, and then moved on and discovered and named Lake Hindmarsh. In a pattern of disappointment often repeated in his later journeys, he attempted to strike north to the Murray, but was forced to turn back by the lack of water. His attempt to find a direct route from Port Phillip to Adelaide was defeated and he had to follow Joseph Hawdon, along the Murray to Adelaide. He found the Aboriginals 'tractable and friendly'.

After a short stay in Adelaide he returned to Sydney, and by October was on his way to Adelaide again with 1000 sheep and 600 cattle, which after a journey of fourteen weeks he offered for sale in Adelaide while they were held at his station in the River Light valley. The profit on the trip was over £4000, half of which was his. He bought an acre (0.4 ha) of land at Adelaide and built a cottage, but by May 1839 was on the move again, this time on a northern exploration. He reached the head of Spencer Gulf and travelled on towards the Flinders Ranges; striking out from his camp at Mount Arden he finally caught sight of the 'dry and glazed bed' of Lake Torrens: 'The whole was barren and arid-looking in the extreme, and as I gazed on the dismal scene before me I felt assured, I had approached the vast and dreary desert of the interior, or, it might be, was verging on the confines of some inland water, whose sterile and desolate shores seem to forbid the traveller's approach'.

Still determined to explore the possibilities of an overland route to the west, he returned to Adelaide, crossed by ship to Port Lincoln, and on his 24th birthday left Port Lincoln with Baxter and two native boys, crossing to the western side of the peninsula which bears his name. He continued round the coast to Streaky Bay, and then returned by the Gawler Range and Lake Torrens, both of which he named, to the head of Spencer Gulf and Adelaide. Reporting on his labours, Eyre wrote: 'I cannot but regret they have not been more productive of interest and utility to the colonists ... During the whole of our course ... of 600 miles [966 km] through, I believe, an hitherto unexplored country, we never crossed a single creek, river, or chain of ponds, nor did we meet with permanent water anywhere, with the exception of three solitary springs on the coast'.

In January 1840 Eyre and two companions took sheep and cattle by sea to King George Sound and then drove them overland to the Swan River Settlement. On his return to Adelaide in May he brought with him an Aborigine, Wylie; there he found that a committee had been formed to organize an expedition to explore an overland route to the west. Eyre offered his services and also undertook to find a third of the horses and pay a third of the expenses. (In fact he paid almost exactly half.) Eyre, however, persuaded the colonists that it would be better to attempt to open up the country to the north, knowing from his previous journeys how difficult it would be to drive stock to the west.

EDWARD JOHN EYRE—DICTIONARY OF BIOGRAPHY ENTRY

The objective of the expedition therefore became, in Governor George Gawler's words, 'the discovery of the interior of Australia'. On 18 June Eyre set out from Adelaide at the head of the expedition, which within a week was made up of six white men, including Baxter, Eyre's assistant, E. B. Scott, two Aborigines, 13 horses, 40 sheep, and stores for three months; more stores were sent up to the head of Spencer Gulf in the government cutter *Waterwitch*, to await the arrival of the overland party.

He struck north from his base at Mount Arden along the Flinders Range, and then in several exhausting thrusts reached Lake Torrens to the west, a southern arm of Lake Eyre to the north, and Mount Hopeless to the east. Disappointed, but with no intention of retiring, Eyre decided 'by crossing over to Streaky Bay to the westward, to endeavour to find some opening leading towards the interior in that direction'. Accordingly he sent Baxter with two men and an Aboriginal to Streaky Bay, and himself took the remainder of the expedition to Port Lincoln. There he sent Scott by boat to Adelaide to request more provisions and permission from his committee to continue to the west. Scott was also instructed to bring Wylie back from Adelaide. By 3 November he rejoined Baxter and his party at Streaky Bay, and they moved on to found a depot at Fowler's Bay. From there, on the third attempt, Eyre reached the head of the Bight, but the difficulties involved made him decide to send all the members of the expedition back to Adelaide, except for Baxter, Wylie and two South Australian Aboriginal men; with them he intended to traverse the 850 miles (1368 km) to King George Sound, with a determination 'either to accomplish the object I had in view, or perish in the attempt'. With eleven pack-horses, the small party left Fowler's Bay on 25 February 1841. On 12 March they reached good water at what is now called Eucla, 'after having passed over one hundred and thirty-five miles (217 km) of desert country, without a drop of water in its whole extent, and at a season of the year most unfavourable for such an undertaking'. As they continued round the Bight they met with the same difficulties of terrain and lack of water, but by the middle of April they were also suffering severely from cold, as they had had to discard most of their clothing. On the night of 29 April two of the natives murdered Baxter and disappeared with most of the provisions and all the serviceable fire-arms. 'At the dead hour of night, in the wildest and most inhospitable wastes of Australia, with the fierce wind raging in unison with the scene of violence before me, I was left, with a single native, whose fidelity I could not rely upon, and who for aught I knew might be in league with the other two, who perhaps were even now, lurking about with the view of taking away my life as they had done that of the overseer'. In 1997 the Ngadjun Mirning man Arthur Dimer said it was Eyre who killed Baxter in a fit of rage because Baxter was drunk; the two South Australian Aboriginal people fled in fright and were speared by Mirning people who were observing the expedition's progress.

For over a month Eyre and Wylie struggled on to the west, until on 2 June at Thistle Cove (near Esperance) they sighted the French whaler *Mississippi* which picked them up and gave them several days hospitality and replenished their stores, for Eyre insisted on completing his overland journey to King George Sound. Moving on through heavy rains and cold weather, they reached Albany on 7 July. For this incredible journey Eyre was awarded the founder's gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society in 1847. The society also published three of his papers.



Geoffrey Dutton, 'Eyre, Edward John (1815–1901)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/eyre-edward-john-2032/text2507>, published first in hardcopy 1966, accessed online 13 January 2020.

This article has been amended since its original publication.

SHUNTING IN TOWNSVILLE SERIES—PART 5

Nick Shailer's Memoirs

On the platform but later moved to the second floor of the old building was the telegraph office. By the time I started Morse Code was out of use and teleprinters were the main form of communication. We had at least a dozen machines and operators, who were all female, with a male operator in charge. There was also a porter whose job was to run telegrams to the required people and swap data tapes from one operator to another so a message could be sent to its destination north, south or west. The noise made by this many machines clattering away was really something.

On the first floor at the town end of the old building was the printing room, run by a porter and on busy days, two, and it was here that all the forms used by the railway were printed along with train notices. These contained all the information on the running of different trains and the times that they were to run, and also if loading was to be picked up or shunting required. The other big job was the weekly circular memo which contained job information and other general notices. There were 3 printing machines and everything to be printed was typed out onto stencils. Sometimes the machines would be running for several hours, with us reloading paper and ink as required.

Next to the printing room was the trains room and it was here I was to work for several years as an acting junior clerk, and one other porter was also working here as a clerk. From these rooms, all wagon movements and locations were controlled, and train diagrams drawn up. These were for the running of trains and were used in the control rooms to which the trains communicated as they progressed along the line. All locations and times were placed on the train diagrams.

My job was to collect and deliver mail, and sort and file documents. I was also the Traffic Superindant and the General Manager's filing clerk, and looked after the train's room morgue (old document storage) which covered three rooms. I was also able to make up train diagrams and run a control board while a controller had a break. The trains room also controlled the replacement of lost or damaged staffs, staff boxes and train tickets for them. I soon found myself looking after these as well.

[From Wikipedia: Token Signalling]

The token system was developed in [Britain](#) in the 19th century, to enable safe working of single-line railways. If a branch line is a dead end with a simple shuttle train service, then a single token is sufficient. The driver of any train entering the branch line (or occupying any part of it) must be in possession of the token, and no collision with another train is possible.



One Train Only token used by Indian Railways

For convenience in passing it from hand to hand, the token was often in the form of a staff, typically 800 mm (31 in) long and 40 mm (1.6 in) diameter, and is referred to as a *train staff*.^[3] Such a staff is usually literally a wooden staff with a brass plate stating the two signal boxes between which it is valid.

In UK terminology, this method of working on simple branch lines was originally referred to as *One Engine in Steam* (OES), and later *One-Train Working* (OTW).^[1] However the system was used on long through lines as well; R H Dutton, Chairman of the [London and South Western Railway](#) explained in 1876 the slow journey time between Exeter and Plymouth by saying, "the cause of the delay is the stopping at every station on the staff system. That really does cause a great delay because if the staff is not there, the train must stop while a man is sent on a horse to get it [from the other end of the section]"; quoted in Williams.^[4]

SHUNTING IN TOWNSVILLE SERIES—5 - NICK SHAILER'S MEMOIRS

Staff and ticket^[edit]

Using only a single token does not provide convenient operation when consecutive trains are to be worked in the same direction. The simple token system was therefore extended: if one train was to be followed by another in the same direction, the driver of the first train was required to be shown the token, but not take possession of it (in theory he was supposed to physically touch the token, but this was not strictly followed). He was given a written authority to enter the single line section, referred to as the *ticket*. He could then proceed, and a second train could follow. In the earliest days the second train could proceed after a designated time interval, as on double lines at the time. However, following the [Armagh rail disaster](#) of 1889, [block working](#) became mandatory.

Seeing the train staff provided assurance that there could be no head-on collision. To ensure that the ticket is not issued incorrectly, a book of numbered tickets is kept in a locked box, the key to which is permanently fastened to the token, or is the token. In addition, the lock prevents the token being removed until the ticket box is closed, and it cannot be closed unless the book of tickets is in the box. Once a ticket is issued, its number is recorded in a Train Register book, and the token is locked in a secure place. This system is known as *staff and ticket*.

In a variation on this principle, called *divisible train staff*, a section of the token referred to as the *ticket portion* was designed to be removed and handed to the driver instead of a paper ticket.

Wikipedia : Token Signalling accessed 6 Jan 2020]

On the top floor of the old building was the dispatch office and stores section. Through here all railway mail passed and was sorted. Weekly notices and circular memos addressed to gangs and stations were bundled in the correct station order and these were then delivered to the Guards on each train to drop off on the way. This section was run by several clerks and porters, and the stores section handled all railway stationery requirements.

There were other offices like Staff and Leave, Accounts, Data, Maintenance Engineers, The General Manager and several others. Though I collected mail throughout these areas, I did not have much to do with them.

Back on the platform from the town end, you would find the cold room (formerly the lamp room), the Trans-ship office, Ladies toilets, and the telegraph office (later used by the CSM). The Station Masters office with the original CSM's office behind it, then the waiting room, Ticket Office, cloak room and the Pay Office completed the offices found on the platform. At the Pay Office you would see several hundred men line up on every second Wednesday to receive their pay in a brown envelope.

On the platform level of the new building was the men's toilets, public bar, refreshment rooms and dining rooms.

When you walked around the corner past the ends of 1 and 2 dock lines, you came to the parcels offices, the platform staff locker, crib rooms and the guards' rooms. Above this section was the refreshment rooms quarters, where some of the girls lived here permanently and there were rooms for staff who came in from the south.

The station masters office worked around the clock for 3 shifts a day (12am to 8am, 8am to 4pm and 4pm to 12am) staffed by the SM and a lad porter. When I started work here, the yard number takers also worked from here, and there were guards coming and going all the time. We also had a call car driver on each shift.

SHUNTING IN TOWNSVILLE SERIES-5—NICK SHAILER'S MEMOIRS

The porter would check rosters for men that phoned in, handle inquiries, make up the guards time sheets for each train on that shift. He would then insert any required train notices and paper work, and locate and have ready the guard's box. Each guard had his own box which contained a torch and any documents he might need, red and green safety flags, a clip board and pens.

If the crew were on an overnight trip and would be staying in the quarters at a foreign depot, a train man's kit was also checked and ready. This was a large canvas bag containing two pillows, two fresh sheets, pillow cases and a gray woollen blanket. On return, the linen was removed and sent for dry cleaning and the kit restocked.

In later years, handheld radios were also checked and placed with the guards paper work. This equipment was required to be signed out to the porter.

There was also plenty of other jobs to do. At night time, I had to unload any parcels in the guards' vans that had come in and look after value boxes. These were a locked box with a one way flap at the top and were chained up in the guards compartment of the van. The boxes were unlocked and placed them on a platform barrow, re-chaining them if required. These boxes contained cash from other small stations and any important mail.

Another job I was often called upon to do was to organize the stock for the Sunlander and Inlander dining cars from the refreshment rooms. The staff there realised after being shown once, I remembered where everything was stored and where it had to go in the dining cars. There was not much room in the kitchens of these cars and correct storage was required.

All fresh food in the Queensland Railways was served on RRR china with silverware. Nowadays it's pre-prepared airline style meals or packaged sandwiches.



Nick's new display cabinet in Hall 2. It contains many personal items of interest from his own collection.

RECENT ACQUISITION—TOWNSVILLE MUSEUM



Recently, we had a visitor to our Museum looking to relocate a family wall clock. The item was in very good condition and was a gift from the donor's father to his mother in 1930. The clock even carries a small plaque which reads, "To Mother from Harold 7-11-30". It will eventually be placed on display appropriately in the 1930s dining room area.

We cannot be certain of where the wall clock was purchased but Horn & Peterson was a jeweller in the town who sold such clocks. This is a lovely postcard from the Museum's collection which shows the showroom area of the shop. This image is possibly from the 1930s.



The plaque from the top section of the wall clock.



Vale Norton and Edna

It is with great regret I have to write of the passing of two long time members of Townsville Museum. Norton Challenor and Edna Shaw both passed within a day of each other in December 2019. Townsville Museum wishes to pass on our condolences to the families and also wants them to know that both members supported the Museum faithfully for many many years.

Townsville Museum visits Cardwell

on Saturday 16 November 2019

On 16 November, TM&HS travelled to Cardwell to visit the various museums of the coastal town of Cardwell. Our group was welcomed to the museum by Stephanie Berger, whose family has a very long association with Cardwell. Her guiding was very informative and thorough and we all enjoyed seeing the museum and learning about the great community spirit there, especially during the trying times of Cyclone Yasi.

At the end of the tour, Harvey presented Stephanie with a decorative match box cover that he acquired during his years of working in the Cardwell area. Harvey has made other such donations to this small but very interesting museum.



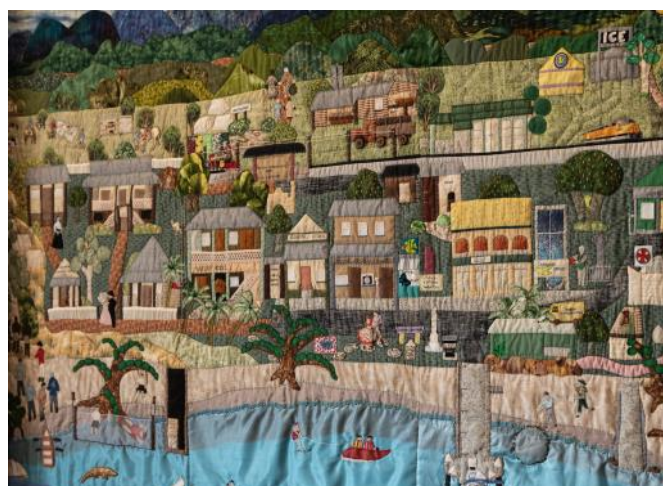
Stephanie Berger of Cardwell Museum receiving the decorative matchbox.



Above: The Post Office building at the museum Left: Cardwell Visitor Centre and Museum
Right: Stephanie leading us through the first building

Visit to Cardwell Museum 16 November 2019

Thanks for a beautiful lunch provided by Harvey and Dell's wonderful neighboursfrom TM&HS.



Top Row: Lunch at Harvey and Dell's house, Steph explaining the Court/Gaol display

Middle Row: Harvey explaining Leichhardt's passage through the Cardwell area, Quilt from the museum foyer

Third Row: Steph leading us through the first room, Kitchen display



Townsville Museum

&

Historical Society Inc.

PO BOX 785

HYDE PARK QLD 4812

Phone: 07 4775 7838

Email: admin@townsvillemuseum.com.au

Website: <http://www.townsvillemuseum.com.au>



TOWNSVILLE MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Charters Towers*

Geoff Hansen

Lyndon Megarrity

Diane Menghetti



OUR SUPPORTERS

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That

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