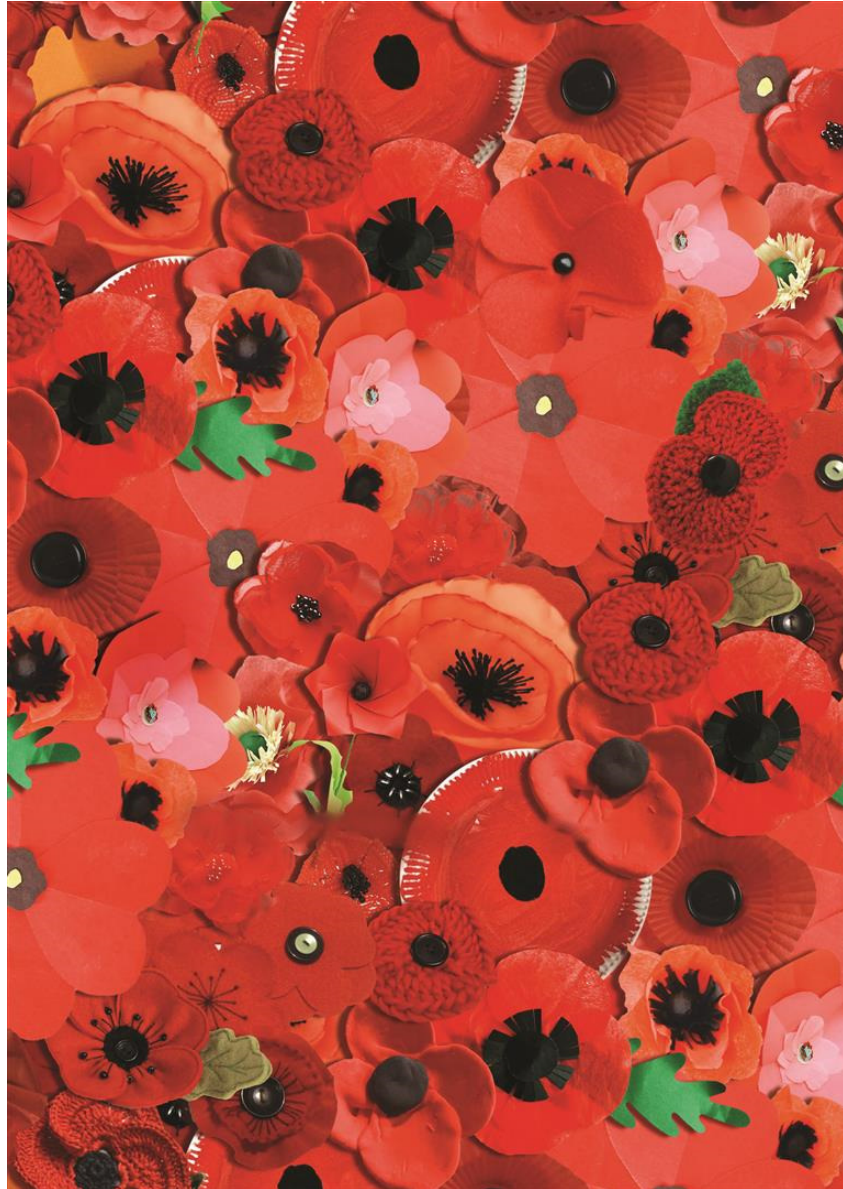


St Mary's Parish Magazine



November - December 2018

50p

Notes from the Editor

*They went with songs to the battle,
they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady
and aglow.*

*They were staunch to the end against
odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.*

*They shall grow not old, as we that
are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the
years condemn.*

*At the going down of the sun and in
the morning
We will remember them.*

Laurence Binyon

November 11th sees the centenary of the ending of The Great War, and St Mary's, through the Warwick Poppies 2018 event, remembers the 11610 soldiers from the Warwickshire Regiment who lost their lives during the conflict.

As we approach the end of the year let us remember too those whom we have loved but are with us no more, and glory in the joy of the birth of Christ as we celebrate Christmas once again.

Tony King

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Footnote:

Copies of the magazine can be posted to your home or friends and relations. Subscription rates are £6.50 for a year (6 editions), including postage. Please contact the Parish Office.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE RECTORY

CENTENARY

In October we officially launched our incredible Warwick Poppies 2018 display with a wonderful gala dinner in St Mary's. An enormous amount of work has gone into every aspect of this venture, from planning and presenting the displays, the organising of the dinner to each one of the flowers themselves made so carefully by people locally and across the world. As Vicar, I would like to express my thanks to the Warwick Poppies Committee and everyone who has made a contribution to this outstanding endeavour.

SACRIFICE

The astonishing number of poppies in church reminds us of several things. In particular, how many people gave their lives in World War 1 and the extent of that impact right down to our own time. The original aim for the poppy project was to gather around 11,000 flowers – one for each of the fallen from the Warwickshire Regiment. The fact that over 62,000 have been made, shows how people continue to be touched by those deeply moving sacrifices. It's timely that as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War in 2018, both Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day fall on the same date. The Warwick Poppies project is a very fitting tribute

LOVE

This year our poppies will overlap in church with our annual Christmas Tree Festival, bringing together the powerful themes of human and divine sacrifice. From the Victorian Evening when the trees are added to Sunday 9th December when everything comes down we shall have a vivid reminder that even in the midst of the most profound human suffering God's love is incarnate and present in the Christ-Child of Bethlehem.

We will remember ...

Vaughan

The Revd Vaughan Roberts

BOY BISHOPS



The Boy Bishop was a widespread ecclesiastical custom in which a boy - usually a chorister - was elected each year to act as bishop for a short period of time, supported by his fellow choirboys, while some of the normal juvenile tasks were carried out by the adult clergy. This role-reversal custom came to Britain from the Continent, the roots lying in the German Church, where

there was already a tradition of lower clergy taking charge on certain days by the tenth century. It had reached England by the twelfth century, and it was at first centred on Holy Innocents' Day (28 December), a day on which other child-centred customs already existed, but it was soon influenced by the rapidly growing popularity of St Nicholas, the new patron saint of children. The two festivals of St Nichols' Day and Holy Innocents' Day gave a natural beginning and end to the Boy Bishop's reign, and he was often elected on the former while his main ceremonial duties fell on the latter.

Almost all the cathedrals and other major religious centres in England had some version of the custom, although the details varied considerably. In essence, the boy was elected, either by his peers or by the real bishop's staff, and was invested with all the accoutrements of a real bishop. In this position he led processions, held services, delivered sermons, and performed all the duties of the normal clergy, except the mass itself. However, the 'role reversal' aspect of this tradition was strictly circumscribed, and only went so far. The boys were expected to behave themselves and were certainly not allowed to parody the services, or puncture the dignity of church officials or ritual. The most that was allowed was a little wry humour in the Boy Bishop's sermons, which were written by the adults. Even so, the Church authorities frequently found it necessary to lay down rules of conduct, and there was often trouble when the boys were out of sight of their masters. One of the most popular aspects of the custom was when he, accompanied by a few other choristers, went round the parish over the Christmas period singing at people's houses, collecting money for the Church, or, occasionally for himself and his companions.

Sporadic attempts to create ceremonies in which girls were allowed to take on similar exalted positions were firmly stamped out by the Church authorities. Boys may have been allowed a little licence, as they would soon be men, but the idea of females stepping out of their assigned lot in life was too abhorrent to the medieval Church to be tolerated even for a short time!

Despite their popularity, Henry VIII summarily banned Boy Bishops in 1541, on the grounds that they dented ecclesiastical dignity. They returned briefly under Queen Mary, only to be banned again by Elizabeth I. They were not to be seen again until the twentieth century, when periods of nostalgia and heritage consciousness led to the revival of various old church practices. Most such revivals come and go, but the strongest modern example is at Hereford Cathedral. Sometimes romanticism outweighs accuracy, and the revival mixes up traditions in interesting ways. In 1949, the journal *Folk-Lore* recorded that:

It was reported in the Daily Graphic (2 May 1949) that a Kentish vicar revived one May Day custom when, in a church packed with young people, the senior choirboy was proclaimed Boy Bishop. Later the Boy Bishop crowned the May Queen who watched a maypole dance outside the church from her floral throne.

SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN

Holy Innocent's Day commemorates the day on which Herod, in his desperate attempt to find the infant Jesus, ordered all children under the age of two in Bethlehem to be killed. It therefore had two slightly conflicting traditional characteristics: the sadness and repentance of a tragic day, coupled with a particular regard for children. In church it was a day of fasting and penance, and the bells were rung in muffled tones. Children were not chastised on the day, and were allowed a certain degree of unaccustomed licence.

The religious background to the day directly affected the way in which it was seen by the people. All over the country, at least until the early twentieth century, the day was regarded as particularly unlucky. This was manifest in various ways – from the general idea that anything started on the day would not be finished, or be doomed to failure, to

specific prohibitions against certain activities, such as doing the family washing ('you will wash one of the family away'). Workers in particularly dangerous occupations refused to work at all on the day (eg fishermen and lead miners).

However, the unluckiness could affect more than the day itself, as reported by Charlotte Burne in 1883:

Innocents' Day, sometimes called 'Cross Day', is a day of ill omen. The ancient people of Pulverbatch (Shropshire) applied this name not only to Innocents' Day but throughout the year to the day of the week on which it had last fallen, such day of the week being believed to be an unlucky day for commencing any work or undertaking. A popular saying about any unfortunate enterprise was: 'It must have begun on Cross day'.

On the same principle, Fridays throughout the year were widely regarded as unlucky, simply because the crucifixion took place on that day. There could therefore be two unlucky or 'cross' days every week!

Steve Roud

A WARWICKSHIRE WASSAIL

Wisselton, wasselton, who lives here?

We've come to taste yer Christmas beer.

Up thu kitchen and down thu hall,

A peck of apples ull serve us all.

Holly and ivy and mistletoe;

Give us some apples and let us goo;

Up with yer stocking, on of yer shoe,

If yer ant got any apples mony ull do.

My carol's done, and I must be gone,

No longer can I stay here.

God bless you all, both great and small,

And send yer a happy new year.

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Long Before the birth of Christ, midwinter had always been a season for public merry making. The focus of the midwinter rituals was the winter solstice - the shortest day – which falls around the 21st December. After this date, the days noticeably lengthen and the return of spring can be anticipated. It was a time to celebrate the end of autumn sowing, and the fact that the sun, crucial to existence as it governed the sowing and ripening of crops, had not totally disappeared.

Bonfires were lit to strengthen the 'Unconquered Sun' and, before the solstice, rituals were held to prevent the sun getting any weaker.

For the Romans, the midwinter festival became linked to their god Saturn who symbolised nature and plenty, and who was believed to be the deity who had introduced agriculture and, with it, civilisation and government. Saturday is named after him.



The Romans called the period between 17th and 23rd December **Saturnalia**, and for seven days they celebrated the 'Golden Age of Saturn'.

It was a time of great merriment. There would be feasting and the exchange of presents, all business suspended, masters swapped places with servants, slaves dressed up in their masters' clothes, donations were given to the poor, and houses were decorated with evergreens. Remind you of anything?

There were other midwinter festivities in the colder parts of Northern Europe. In Germany, Scandinavia and Greenland, Teutonic tribes celebrated their Festival of **Yule** in honour of their gods Odin and Thor. Candles were lit and fires burned in anticipation of the warm sun after the dark and icy winter. One of the key parts of this festival was the burning of the Yule log. This tradition, along with the decoration of homes with evergreen, can still be seen

For Christians the world over, this period celebrates the story of Jesus being born in a stable in Bethlehem. Unfortunately the scriptures give neither the time of year or date of the nativity – and are based on accounts written down long after the events they describe. Our calendar calculates years supposedly from the birth of Christ but, in fact, this was drawn up in the 6th century by a 'miscalcu-

lating' Italian monk, Dionysius, to correspond with a Roman Festival. It has been deduced that Jesus must have been born by 4 BC as this was the year Herod died. But the gospels also say that Joseph and Mary went to Nazareth for the census – which was not held until 11 years later. In fact, the early church did not celebrate Christ's birth but his baptism – believed to be on 6th January, coinciding with the visit of the Magi. The Feast of the Epiphany is still a major festival in Europe today.

It was not until the 4th century that the Nativity was thought of as a key festival at all. Before then it was celebrated on various dates ranging from early January through to late September, Pope Julius I in 336 AD established the date finally as 25th December. This choice appears to have been both a logical and shrewd decision – and not entirely Christian.

As Christianity moved North and West into Europe, it found well-established pagan places of worship and celebrations. Pope Gregory I advised Augustine to approach the pagan holy places and practices by taking them over rather than destroying them and so alienating the people. And as with the building, so with the festivals. The church simply adopted popular dates for its own special rituals and hallowed services. In other words, it was easier to establish a festival celebrating the birth of Christ if it conveniently coincided with an existing popular feast day. In this way, people could continue with their usual celebrations at this time of the year, but the reason for the merrymaking could be attributed to Christ's birth rather than to any ancient pagan rituals. As paganism died out and Christianity became widespread, Christmas became increasingly more associated with its religious foundations than any others.

In Britain, 25th December had been 'Mothers Night', when a vigil was held in honour of the rebirth of the new sun. It was not until 816 that a Church Council at Chelsea formally changed it to honour the birth of the Son of God. In the next century, during the reign of the Saxon King Ethelred, a law was made that the season of the Nativity should be made a time of peace and goodwill, when all strife must end. At this time, the festival was always referred to as 'In Festis Nativitatis' or 'Natalis', the Feast of the Nativity. The anglicised 'Christes-Masse' – the Mass or Feast of Christ – did not appear until after the Norman invasion.

THE CHRISTMAS TRUCE



The Christmas truce (German: *Weihnachtsfrieden*; French: *Trêve de Noël*) was a series of widespread but unofficial ceasefires along the Western Front of World War I around Christmas 1914.

The Christmas truce occurred during the relatively early period of the war (month 5 of 51). Hostilities had entered somewhat of a lull as leadership on both sides reconsidered their strategies following the stalemate of the Race to the Sea and the indecisive result of the First Battle of Ypres. In the week leading up to the 25th, French, German, and British soldiers crossed trenches to exchange seasonal greetings and talk. In some areas, men from both sides ventured into no man's land on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day to mingle and exchange food and souvenirs. There were joint burial ceremonies and prisoner swaps, while several meetings ended in carol-singing. Men played games of football with one another, giving one of the most memorable images of the truce. Peaceful behaviour was not ubiquitous; fighting continued in some sectors, while in others the sides settled on little more than arrangements to recover bodies.

The following year, a few units arranged ceasefires but the truces were not nearly as widespread as in 1914; this was, in part, due to strongly worded orders from the high commands of both sides prohibiting truces. Soldiers were no longer amenable to truce by 1916. The war had become increasingly bitter after devastating human losses suffered during the battles of the Somme and Verdun, and the use of poison gas.

The truces were not unique to the Christmas period, and reflected a mood of "live and let live", where infantry close together would stop overtly aggressive behaviour and often engage in small-scale fraternisation, engaging in conversation or bartering for cigarettes. In some sectors, there would be occasional ceasefires to allow soldiers to go between the lines and recover wounded or dead comrades, while in others, there would be a tacit agreement not to shoot while men rested, exercised or worked in full view of the enemy. The Christmas truces were particularly significant due to the number of men involved and the level of their participation — even in very peaceful sectors, dozens of men openly congregating in daylight was remarkable — and are often seen as a symbolic moment of peace and humanity amidst one of the most violent events of human history.

Bruce Bairnsfather who served throughout the war, wrote:

I wouldn't have missed that unique and weird Christmas Day for anything.... I spotted a German officer, some sort of lieutenant I should think, and being a bit of a collector, I intimated to him that I had taken a fancy to some of his buttons.... I brought out my wire clippers and, with a few deft snips, removed a couple of his buttons and put them in my pocket. I then gave him two of mine in exchange.... The last I saw was one of my machine gunners, who was a bit of an amateur hairdresser in civil life, cutting the unnaturally long hair of a docile Bosch, who was patiently kneeling on the ground whilst the automatic clippers crept up the back of his neck.

Future nature writer Henry Williamson, then a nineteen-year-old private in the London Rifle Brigade, wrote to his mother on Boxing Day:

Dear Mother, I am writing from the trenches. It is 11 o'clock in the morning. Beside me is a coke fire, opposite me a 'dug-out' (wet) with straw in it. The ground is sloppy in the actual trench, but frozen elsewhere. In my mouth is a pipe presented by the Princess Mary. In the pipe is tobacco. Of course, you say. But wait. In the pipe is German tobacco. Haha, you say, from a prisoner or found in a captured trench. Oh dear, no! From a German soldier. Yes a live German soldier from his own trench. Yesterday the British & Germans met & shook hands in the Ground between the trenches, & exchanged souvenirs, & shook hands. Yes, all day Xmas day, & as I write. Marvellous, isn't it?

NEVER A CROSS WORD!

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8						9						
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14							15					16
						17						
18					19							
									20			
21								22				
23				24								

ACROSS

1. Worship the Devil disguised as Matins! (8)
5. First Lady, whichever way you look at it. (3)
8. "Spectre? Not I", in anger. (5)
9. A letter to the French preacher. (7)
10. Many read about this churchyard tree. (5)
11. Intercede for one's victim, we hear? (4)
14. More points to deliver a discourse. (6)
15. Songs sound as if they would be a fine thing! (6)
18. Feline has nothing for Joseph's colourful wear. (4)
19. Cardinal gets message – it's cutting! (5)
21. Wife of David gets a large drink, we hear! (7)
22. Bishop on a journey to find someone for a wedding. (5)
23. Starting now, Ursulines nowhere to be found in the convent! (3)
24. Although retired, cardinals go after a new name for Azariah. (8)

DOWN

2. First person to be found today in the morning? (4)
3. Sh! No leak from this biblical city. (8)
4. Savings I almost have returning a profit, say. (6)
5. Space on the seat to install a bishop? (8)
6. Point member to an unknown song of mourning. (5)
7. Mystics who miss a woman initially being around. (6)
12. Not a rice pudding for starters! (8)
13. Confused Herb in charge of a French angel. (8)
16. Russian cardinals in captivity. (6)
17. Midnight disciples? (6)
18. Tea at home - St Peter found it confining! (5)
20. Smile about what is given to 22. (4)

THOUGHT FOR FOOD

Sherried turkey and ham bake

A delicious way to use up the turkey leftovers

Ingredients

- 350g/12oz cooked turkey, cut into strips
- 140g thickly sliced cooked ham, cut into strips
- 175g frozen peas
- 50g butter, plus a little extra for greasing the dish
- 50g plain flour
- 600ml milk
- 3 tbsp medium sherry
- 2 tsp wholegrain mustard
- 100g cheddar, grated
- 50g chopped mixed nut, such as hazelnuts, almonds, and walnuts



Preparation: 15 minutes

Cook: 35 minutes

Serves 4

Preheat the oven to 200C/Gas 6/fan oven 180C. Mix the turkey, ham and frozen peas in a buttered ovenproof dish.

To make the sauce, put the butter, flour and milk in a saucepan and bring to the boil, whisking all the time, until the sauce is thickened and smooth. Stir in the sherry and mustard, season to taste and simmer for 1 minute. Remove from the heat and stir in half the cheese.

To finish the dish, pour the sauce over the ingredients in the dish. Mix the remaining cheese with the nuts and sprinkle on top. At this point, you can keep the bake in the fridge up to 5 hours, or freeze it. When ready, bake for 25-35 minutes until the topping is golden and the sauce is bubbling. Serve with seasonal vegetables.

CAROL SINGERS

The mark of the astonishing success of the modern Christmas as a popular festival is that it can be all things to all people, and within its elastic parameters each person has plenty of room for individual choices. Christmas carols are just one seasonal element among many, but even here there are various ways in which we encounter them. We may sing them at school, hear them piped around the supermarket ad nauseam, or performed by a group in period costume at the shopping centre, in aid of charity, or in a splendid ecclesiastical setting. In his book *The English Folk Carol* (1967), Douglas Brice writes, 'One of the most wonderful experiences that can come the way of anyone living in the north-west of England is to be present in the Anglican cathedral in Liverpool for the annual Carol Service at Christmas time.'

However, we all know, in our Dickensian hearts, that carol singers should be heard through a cottage window on a clear cold frosty night in deepest rural England. This may be an unattainable dream for most of us nowadays, but it was indeed the reality only a hundred years or so ago, as shown by author Alison Uttley's memories of Derbyshire Christmases about 1890:

She hung her stocking at the foot of the bed and fell asleep. But soon singing roused her, and she sat up, bewildered. Yes, it was the carol-singers. Margaret came running upstairs and wrapped her in a blanket. She took her across the landing to her own room, and pulled up the linen blind. Outside under the stars she could see the group of men and women, with lanterns throwing beams across the paths and on to the stable door. One man stood apart beating time, another played the fiddle, and another had a flute. The rest sang in four parts the Christmas hymns, 'While shepherds watched', 'Come all ye faithful', and 'Hark the herald angels sing' ... They trooped, chattering and puffing out their cheeks, and clapping their arms around their bodies, to the front door. They were going into the parlour for elderberry wine and their collection money. A bright light flickered across the snow as the door was flung wide open. Then a bang, and Susan went back to bed.

The songs in today's basic carol repertoire are a pleasantly mixed hotchpotch of different periods and styles, although we like to think of them as timeless. A few are indeed traditional, in the sense that they originated before the mid nineteenth century and show signs of transmission over the generations by informal means, and usually their

authors are not known; these include 'The Holly and the Ivy', 'God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen', 'As I Sat on a Sunny Bank', and 'The Cherry Tree Carol'. But most are the work of nineteenth-century enthusiasts. Some are American: 'We Three Kings of Orient Are' was written around 1857 by Dr John Henry Hopkins of Williamsport, and 'Away in a Manger' was first published in the American Lutheran collection *A Little Children's Book for Schools and Families* in 1885. 'Silent Night' was written by parish priest Joseph Mohr and schoolteacher/organist Franz Gruber, of Hallein, Austria, in 1818, but 'While Shepherds Watched' is older, being written by Irish clergyman Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady around 1700. While modern carols are written all the time, adding to the repertoire of choirs and professional singers, few new pieces have tunes that are sufficiently memorable to really catch on with the public.

Steve Roud



CHRISTMAS FOR CHILDREN

Christmas is more than a day in December, it's all of those things that we like to remember; it's carollers singing familiar refrains, bright coloured stockings and shiny toy trains; streamers of tinsel and glass satin balls, laughter that rings through the house and its halls; Christmas is more than a day in December, it's the magic and love that we'll always remember.

M E Miro

Autumn 2018 Lunchtime Recitals

Fridays at 1:15pm Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick

- 2 November Carleton Hetherington (Tewkesbury Abbey) – organ
16 November Florence Lloyd (Kings High School, Warwick) – clarinet
7 December Mark Swinton (St Mary's, Warwick) – organ
21 December Oliver Hancock (St Mary's, Warwick) - organ

Admission free, retiring collection

AND FINALLY

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

ACROSS 1 Satanism 5 Eve 8 Wrath 9 Apostle 10 Cedar 11 Pray 14 Sermon
15 Chants 18 Coat 19 Sword 21 Abigail 22 Bride 23 Nun 24 Abednego

DOWN 2 Adam 3 Ashkelon 4 Isaiah 5 Enthroned 6 Elegy 7 Swamis
12 Creation 13 Cherubim 16 Slaves 17 Twelve 18 Chain 20 Ring

Who's Where in The Warwick Team

Contacts in our partner churches in the Warwick Team include:

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Revd Linda Duckers (Team Vicar) 496209

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Bell Ringers	492783
1 st Warwick St Mary's Rainbows/Brownies/Guides	403185
Choir	403940
Friends of St Mary's Choir	07549 534339
Collegium	498851
St Mary's Scholars	403940
Flowers	857351
Church Guides	403940
Gift Shop	403940
Sunday School	312861
Friends of St Mary's Church	419991
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