

HUT NEWS

"Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow's People"



"The worst thing that can happen is not energy depletion, economic collapse, limited nuclear war or conquest by a totalitarian government. Terrible as these catastrophes would be for us, they can be repaired within a few generations. The one process ongoing in the 1980-90s that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us." (E.O. Wilson, *Harvard Magazine*, Feb 1980.)

Meeting on 26 January

Our January general meeting will be held on Australia Day. We will celebrate Australia Day and Blue Mountains World Heritage with a special meeting. In the first half there will be a guest (yet to be organised) who will tell us about World Heritage and what it will mean to the Blue Mountains, and we will be entertained by poetry inspired by the Blue Mountains.

After supper, our guest speaker will be David Geering, the coordinator of the Regent Honeyeater recovery program. Australia is renowned for its fantastic biodiversity, but so many species are in danger of extinction. Here is a group of people who are trying to do something about it. In the Blue Mountains area, regular tree plantings in the Capertee Valley are increasing the Regent Honeyeater's chance of survival.

The Regent Honeyeater was once a common bird of the woodlands west of the divide, but is now one of Australia's rarest birds as well as one of its most beautiful. Aimed at preventing its extinction, the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Effort has been working for six years to increase our knowledge of this enigmatic bird. This knowledge is being put to use in identifying causes for the species decline and devising ways to stop and reverse this worrying trend.

David Geering will outline the past and current status of the Regent Honeyeater, the findings of six years of research as well as the actions currently being undertaken as part of the Recovery Effort.

The meeting at the Conservation Hut, end of Fletcher Street, Wentworth Falls, starts at 7.30 pm on Friday 26 January. Bring your friends, up for the long weekend. Visitors will be very

THE DEADLINE

FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF HUT NEWS IS
FRIDAY 19 JANUARY 2001

AMENDMENT 25 FINALISED

The 5 December 2000 Council meeting saw Councillors finalise Amendment 25 to Local Environment Plan 1991. This amendment has been many years in the making and now goes to the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning for ratification.

The Amendment was finalised on the casting vote of the Mayor, after Councillors had voted six-six on a BMCS/RAID request that Council reinstate clauses that had been changed between the time the Amendment was on public exhibition and when it came before Council.

Councillors in favour of the BMCS/RAID request were Cirs Greenhill, Burrigge, Henson, Searle, Gaul and Kozelj. Opposed were Cirs Hamilton, van der Kley, Kime, Myles, Egan and Angel. When announcing the tied vote, Mayor Angel announced that his casting vote would be to maintain the status quo, which, in this case, was to re-instate the clauses that had been on exhibition. His comments were greeted with much applause from the large audience in the chamber.

Amendment 25 will improve the level of Environment protection in the lands covered by LEP1991 — primarily the land on village edges and the land between villages.

Much of this land is steeply sloping, has watercourses on it, has rocky outcrops, or contains rare flora and fauna. This Amendment recognises the importance of these features, and will limit the amount of land clearing and subdivision that will be possible.

The clauses that Council reinstated had previously been agreed by Council, had been on exhibition, and had drawn no adverse comment from the Community. By ensuring that the finalised plan was consistent with the version that was on public exhibition, approval by the State Government must now be a mere formality. We are looking forward to seeing this Amendment included in LEP1991 early in the new year.

World Heritage Listing was announced just recently. One week later, it would have been an amazing about-face for Council to have passed a watered-down version of Amendment 25.

welcome.

Eco Site Tour Sunday, January 21

Inspired by the Non-Conventional Home Tours in Taree, the Enviro Ed group of the Society thought it might be nice to do something similar in the Mountains. So we've got a substantial list of places that have been built or renovated using features such as solar passive design, composting toilets, mud brick, strawbales, solar panels, etc.

The more one looks into 'eco design' the more one realizes that there is a lot to

learn. As The Hut's architect Nigel Bell said, good design starts with a site analysis, i.e. looking at solar access for energy efficiency, and so on. It's not just a matter of building with mud bricks. In one book about healthy design, called *The Healthy House* (by Sydney & Joan Baggs), it gives a good summary of what it's about: "The aim is to provide living environments that are free from pollutants, are in tune with the needs, feelings and spiritual aspirations of the family, and in concert with the nature around us."

So, on January 21st, 2001, we're going to take a little excursion, in a community bus, and visit some of the examples of eco designs, between Woodford and Blackheath, and find out for ourselves what a difference this makes. It will be an interesting, informative and inspiring day, to see how passionate these people are about their living spaces and

how much work and thought has gone into it. Everyone is most welcome!

If you'd like to join us, please book on Ph: 4782-5375 (Vera) or 4751-3671 (Vanessa). Places are limited so we'd like to know by January 10th. We'll meet at Wentworth Falls Station at 9.15 sharp. Please bring your lunch, drink, hat. The community bus will take us first to Woodford, then we'll make our way up to Blackheath and back to Wentworth Falls by 3.30 pm.

"Hut News", the newsletter of Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc.

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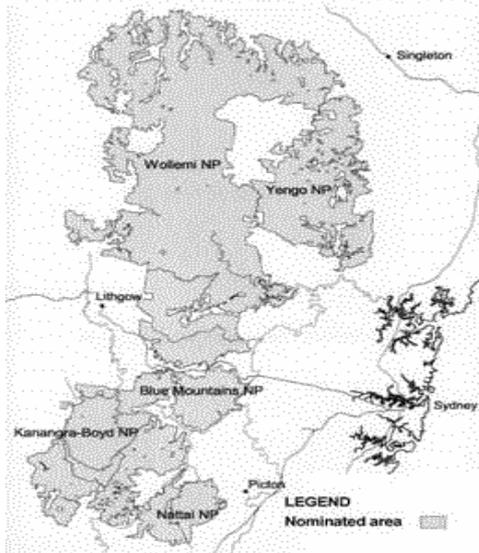
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World Heritage — At Last

At its recent Annual Meeting, held in Cairns, the World Heritage Committee unanimously added the Greater Blue Mountains to the World Heritage Register. The listed area covers 10,326 square kilometres — an area about one-sixth the size of Tasmania. The area comprises seven National Parks — Blue Mountains, Wollemi, Yengo, Gardens of Stone, Kanangra-Boyd, Nattai and Thirlmere Lakes — and Jenolan Caves Karst Conservation Reserve. No private lands are included in the listed area.

The criterion finally chosen to list the area was the uniqueness of its eucalyptus population. Earlier efforts to recognise the area's cultural significance and its geomorphology were not pursued by the Australian Government.

The campaign to list the area commenced in the 1980's, with the Colong Foundation leading the campaign for the entire duration — with very active support from our members. As the campaign progressed, support was eventually received from all levels of Government — Local, State and Commonwealth — together with widespread support from the community at large.

The nomination was submitted to the World Heritage Committee in June 1998, with the expectation that the listing would be agreed at the WHC Paris meeting in late 1999. However, at that meeting, concern was expressed about a number of matters — primarily connected with the urban impact on the National Parks and the extent of the inholdings within the nominated area. There was also the suggestion that the nomination be resubmitted as part of a serial nomination, covering eucalypt forests in a number of Australian States. The nomination was then deferred, pending receipt of further information from Australia.

The Australian Government responded vigorously and gave the matter very serious attention. Colong Foundation obtained expert endorsement for the nomination. Both lobbied the 21-

nation WHC extensively. The result was the unanimous vote in favour of the nomination when it came back to the WHC at Cairns on 29 November 2000.

In putting forward the nomination, the Australian Government promised to retain the area in pristine condition for all time, and to restore any degraded parts. We should expect additional funding to be made available for environmental restoration and protection. Yes, World Heritage Listing will also bring additional tourism to the area, but we believe that the benefits from the additional protection afforded by the Listing outweigh the extra impact from increased visitation.

We often write to Government asking for their support for our campaigns. It has been a pleasure to be able to write to our Local Members of Parliament and to others involved in the campaign, to pass on the Society's thanks for a successful outcome. There have been many who deserve our thanks, and comparisons are always difficult. However, there is absolutely no doubt that Keith Muir from the Colong Foundation played a major part in the successful outcome. Special thanks must go to the Joan and Serge Domicelj, (Leura residents and Society members), the editors of the nomination document. Bob Debus has been very supportive, and made a special trip to Cairns — a trip that had a major impact on the World Heritage Committee. And, we must not forget Pam Allan, the previous Environment Minister, who played a pivotal role in the earlier stages of the nomination process.

Let's all enjoy this wonderful outcome!

Interview with Alex Colley

Members of our Environmental Education Sub-committee recently interviewed Alex Colley of the Colong Foundation. Here is a transcript:

Question: Having been involved in campaigning for the protection of the Blue Mountains for so long, what does the World Heritage mean to you now?

Alex: Well, it means the culmination of a very long campaign, that goes back 70 years. It started off with Milo Dunphy's Greater Blue Mountains National Parks Scheme, and that was promoted for a while before the War and then not very much happened till the National Parks Association was formed and then it really got underway when the Colong Foundation was appointed (or the Colong Committee as it was then) in 1968 and Milo Dunphy was the organizer of that. ...Then there was the Colong Caves campaign which was successful and then, a little while afterwards, we started the Boyd Plateau campaign to stop the pine plantation there. And we went on battling against one thing and another, the gas pipeline across the Wolongambi Wilderness, and there was a road proposed through the national park, and the raising of the dam which would have flooded the Cowmung River, and dams up the Colo and powerline... and Kanangra Boyd National Parks, and everything you can

think of, we've been fighting all the way. And of course, we campaigned in 1975 when we'd won our Rainforest Campaign [all the rain forests in the north of NSW], which were proposed by Neville Wran to become World Heritage areas. Then, after that, there was Wollemi National Park, very largely done by the Colo Committee, with our support of course. And then there was another drive for the Nattai National Park and the last one was the Gardens of Stone National Park. We started our Blue Mountains for World Heritage campaign at the end of 1986.

Question: Was that the first time that it was proposed to be listed?

Alex: Well, it was the first time that we had thought about it and we spent a little while organising a submission for the park, which we did eventually. We asked for grants of course and didn't get them ...and anyway, eventually we thought we'd go it alone and we asked Geoff Mosely [member for 7 years of the ISN World Heritage Committee and for many years president of the Australian Conservation Foundation] if he'd take it on and we financed his book "Blue Mountains for World Heritage".

Question: So how does it feel to you personally now, after all those years of hard work?

Alex: It makes me feel very good because it's the culmination of all those years, right back to the 1930's, in trying to preserve the Blue Mountains, and that was our idea. We'd got the Blue Mountains National Parks dedicated and we thought, well, to get the maximum protection, the thing to do is to get World Heritage because then it becomes not only the Blue Mountains Council's job to look after it, but the State Government and the Commonwealth Government, too. There's a big incentive there, with this World Heritage, even if they don't fully appreciate the value of the mountains, to appreciate it and protect it. So that's what it means to me.

Question: I gather you used to walk in the mountains in the 30's.

Alex: I started long before that. I used to live in Lithgow and I used to walk in the mountains as a kid. ... The first walk I did through there was in 1925, we went down to the Cox's River. We went down there to shoot rabbits really, but we did a little walking. But from then on, I've been going for walks to the mountains ever since, on and off, mostly on. When I joined Sydney Bushwalkers, that was their favourite walking area and I suppose I've climbed all the mountains and practically all the rivers. I've probably done more walking in the mountains than almost anyone else.

Question: What do you think we need to do now to better protect this World Heritage area?

Alex: Well, I think the first thing to do is to try and get the National Parks and Wildlife Services to have some sense and realize that their Memorandum of Understanding, which enables the 4WD clubs to use some of the dirt tracks in the mountains, [is no good and] should be resisted very strongly. We are preparing a website now about the damage done by

4WD's. It was condemned by the State Pollution Control Commission Inquiry, in 1981. ... And horse-riding could do a lot of damage. A few horses in the old days of the cattlemen didn't do much harm but when you've got a dozen or more horses traipsing up and down the Cox or through the Kuringai Chase, they make a hell of a mess of the place.

Question: Anything else?

Alex: I would like to say one thing and that is that the person who did all the work was not me but Keith Muir, the director of the Colong Foundation. He worked day and night for years on the thing and he went up with our assistant director Tom Whiddup and they had a beautiful Lobby Book, illustrated with Henry Gold's photographs, and the feature of it was that it summarised or just gave a brief description of the opinions of 12 leading botanists. One of them was Sir Robert May, the scientific adviser to the British Government and another one was Professor Raven who is about the top botanist in the U.S. and then there was Professor Spatier (?) in Australia and a number of other Australians, leading botanists, who all said that the Blue Mountains should become a World Heritage area because of its values. That had a lot to do with it, because when Keith and Tom went up there, they took this Lobby Book and they were able to interview all of the 21 members of the World Heritage Committee, give them a Lobby Book, and talk to them. Now a lot of them didn't know anything about the Blue Mountains and neither the State nor the Commonwealth government had gone to the trouble of giving them much data on it. So they listened to Tom and Keith and although, when they went, about 8 were in favour of it, by the time they'd finished with them, all 21 voted for World Heritage for the Blue Mountains. That was a wonderful thing. So Keith is the real architect of it.

And Henry Gold's photography was another reason why we won this. Because politicians don't go bushwalking really and they don't know much about the place, but when they see Henry Gold's photographs, they realized it's something worthwhile. So, Henry has been a very valued supporter of our campaign.

Question: Do you think that citizens who have houses up here can contribute to the protection of it in some way?

Alex: Oh, yes. They can protest against harmful developments such as developments on the edge of the cliff.... They're proud of the place and they can resist any moves to put resorts in the middle of the wilderness or give the 4WD drivers and the horse-riders, and... I noticed when I was up there with the ABC, there was a blasted helicopter reverberating up and down there, at the top of the Jamison Valley, and it absolutely stopped the serenity of the scene and I think there would have been several hundred people who would have heard it. I think that's one thing local people can do. We'll resist them all the time but I think protests from the local people would be even more valuable.

Greenhouse Corner Integral Facts

During the recent Sustainable Energy Workshop held at Lawson, the only invited guest speaker who actually turned up was John Ross from Integral Energy.

John is a friendly fellow, whose job at Integral is to sell less electricity! He conducts energy audits for business and domestic customers, and shows them how to reduce their energy use.

As John was the only guest speaker, we used the opportunity to grill him for some electricity facts. Here are some facts about hot water heaters.

Each kilowatt hour of electricity used produces 1 kilogram of carbon dioxide at the power station, and the average home produces 17 tonnes of CO₂ through electricity consumption. Most of this consumption comes from hot water and space heating.

An average domestic electric water heater produces as much CO₂ as a family car!

Hot water systems are replaced on average every 12 years. As they are normally replaced after a catastrophic failure, most people install the same system again. So to

get people to install gas-boosted solar hot water systems, the installation must be planned and undertaken before the old system fails. The pay-back period for a solar hot water system is about 7 years, yet they last about 15 years, making them economical right now.

John Ross believes that most people will only spend money on reducing their energy consumption if it has a short-term economic pay-back and/or it will immediately improve their comfort level. For this reason, Integral concentrate on efficiency measures like insulation, double glazing, pelmeted curtains and draught excluders.

I have been critical of Integral Energy in the past for not having a 'real' green energy program whereby customers can buy renewable energy for a premium price. Integral will be introducing such a scheme in 2001, using electricity from wind power and biomass (sugar cane waste) systems from around the State. *Ross Coster.*



Welcome to New Members

James Lees, Guildford
Andy Cairns, Woodford
Marek Bowman, Glenbrook
Dianne Eyre, Springwood
Astrid Evans, Hazelbrook
Rhonda Phillis, Faulconbridge
Rachel Bowman, Glenbrook
Suzanne Hodge, Valley Heights
Matt Johns, Leura
Astrid Stephens, Linden
Mike and Kim Williams, Katoomba
Ron and Pauline Hartshorn, Bullaburra
Alison Towerton, Bullaburra
David and Simone Bowskill, Wentworth Falls
Ray Green, Katoomba
Jacqueline Cole, Glenbrook
Carolyn Williams, Woodford
Steve Burton and Jackie van der Neut, Springwood
Pauline Evatt, Leura
Barbara Usher, Faulconbridge
Christopher and Carol Ann Steward, Faulconbridge

Call for a member with a Flair?

Do you have a flair for preparing posters or leaflets?

Every couple of months the Committee needs someone to help present information for either a public display or to illustrate a point to Councillors or politicians. Usually it will involve using photos and text already prepared. Someone is needed to present it and organise copying or mounting etc.

This could be a job for you if you are only available to help the Society every now and then. Hopefully we could develop a list of those interested — just ring Meredith on 4782.4823 or email mountains@hermes.net.au

The Wrong Trees in the Wrong Place?

Recently there has been a spate of letters in the Blue Mountains Gazette regarding 14 Canary Island Date Palms planted at Blaxland.

Our weed experts agree that Canary Island Date Palms are an environmental weed in NSW. Weed mapping for the Urban Runoff Control Program by The Bush Doctor has shown that this species is already spreading as a weed in the Blaxland area.

Date Palms are dioecious. That is males and females are separate plants. If only males are planted there will be no seeds so it will not spread.

Don Morison, whose column will be back next month, has had advice from Botanist Roger Lambit, who says that this species has become a bushland pest in the Pittwater area where a number have been planted in nearby urban areas.

Mr Lambit told Don that the seeds are spread by Currawongs and that the Blaxland plants are a disappointing departure from the RTAs usual responsible planting policies.



**"I've lived
in
Blaxland
80 years -
No-one
ever comes
here for a
date."**

*(Graphics:
Joshua
Thompson;
Text: Don
Morison)*

Thursday Bushwalks

Our Thursday morning interpretive bushwalks will start again on 8 February.

Walks will be in the upper mountains where the weather is not always so hot, and we will seek cool places on hot days. There will be eight walks of 3-4 hours duration, medium grade, at a leisurely pace. Cost will be \$20 for the eight walks, with expert guests on some. Numbers will be limited. Contact Christine on 4787.7246.

Walking, Gawking and Relating

My partner Glenys and I have enjoyed our Thursday walks with BMCS this year. For me, being a newcomer to the mountains and BMCS, the walks have been a very enchanting and inspiring introduction to, and sensing of place. Our last two walks into Mount Wilson and Glastonbell were particularly so.

When Mr Zinfandorfer - whom I assume is the senior caretaker of Glastonbell - was welcoming our group to the property, he reminded me of the quality of Earth-Human relationship that still exists among some of the senior anangu custodians of Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park. Glenys and I found it very encouraging to meet a group of Australians of European descent who publicly declare their land to be 'sacred land' and then relate to it and care for it accordingly.

The whole walk experience inspired me to dig out my copy of the report of the re-nomination of Uluru as a 'cultural landscape' (DEST 1994), which describes the extent to which the phenomenon of sacred sites reached a unique level of sophistication among Australia's indigenous people. The custodians of Glastonbell appear to be carrying on this powerful Australian tradition in an appropriate and valuable modern day context. The above report is now in the BMCS library for members reference.

Even though I have enjoyed a lengthy career of conservation work (1973 - 1998), including an inspiring decade (the 1990's) among the descendants of indigenous Australians, I have still found it increasingly difficult to imagine how society at large can become more motivated to enjoy and act wisely toward our natural environment. Hopefully the recent World Heritage Area listing of the Blue Mountains National Park will help more people to value the biodiversity of this unique place.

In the context of our BMCS Environmental Education program, I am beginning to suspect that the BMCS walking program is one of our most effective practices. We humans appear to be at our best when we are walking, gawking and relating together in the bush - and what an enchanting bushland we have surrounding us here in the Blue Mountains! Yesterday I was able to sit

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Jan 20 (Sat)** **Management Meeting**, 9 am, Mid Mountains Community Centre, Lawson.
Jan 21 (Sun) **Eco Site Tour.** (see page 1)
Jan 26 (Fri) **Australia Day General Meeting**, at the Conservation Hut, 7.30 pm. Guest speaker will be David Geering, National co-ordinator of the Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program. (see page 1)

QUOLL CLUB (Activities for 12 and under)

For more information contact Jessica on 4757.2783. For a copy of the Quoll Club Newsletter, phone Ross Coster 4759.1247.

BUSHCARE (Tools provided — bring morning tea and gloves.)

- Jan 09 (Tue)** **Valley of the Waters Bushcare Group.** (2nd Tuesday of every month) Contact Jessica 4757.2783 for the meeting place. (following Tuesday if wet).
Jan 14 (Sun) **Digger Cooper Reserve Bushcare Group.** (2nd Sunday of every month) Meet 9 am at the Reserve (GWH, West of Sorenson Bridge). Contact Ross Coster 4759.1247.

BUSHWALKS: *Carry drinking water (minimum 1 litre), bring morning tea, and lunch for day walks. Wear shoes with a good tread.*

Monday Leisure Walks: *Usually half day walks, easy/medium, leisurely pace.*

- Jan 15** **Harbour Foreshores from Cremorne Wharf to Mosman to Taronga.** Meet on train, 6.39 from Lithgow (7.42 at Lawson). Morning tea at Lee's. Take lunch. Easy.
Jan 22 **Bus to the 'Warringah Bicentennial Coastal Walk' Bilgola.** Starting 8.30 am from Anna-Maries, Honour Ave, Lawson. Meet at Lawson Pharmacy 8.30. Arrange other pick-ups with Bill Graham 4759.1692. Take lunch. Easy. **Booked seats only, only a few left — Call now.**
Jan 29 **Braeside Walk to Govetts Leap.** Meet Blackheath Neighbourhood Centre 9 am. Contact June Baxter 4787.7312. BBQ after at Govetts Leap. This is an outstanding walk and always popular.
Feb 05 **Tessellated Pavements at Mount Irvine.** Meet Mt Vic Station 9 am. Contact Jock McKecknie 4758.6346. Long walk, easy. BBQ after. Last year's top popular walk.

Bushwalks: *Walks of various grades, full or half day.*

- Jan 13 (Sat)** No walk is planned, but you are welcome to attend the Bushwalking Workshop and Brunch to help plan the 2001 walks program. It will be held in Noble Street, Bullaburra and RSVP required by 7 January. Contact Bill Graham 4659.1692.
Jan 14 (Sun) **Neates Glen to Grand Canyon.** Meet commuter carpark, Blackheath Station 9.30. Contact Meredith Brownhill 4782.4823. Long morning walk, medium. Take lunch and extra water if hot. Steep climb out.
Jan 20 (Sat) **Glastonbell circuit walk.** Meet Mt Vic Station 9.30. Contact Alan Macaulay 4739.2767. Long morning walk. Medium. Take lunch.
Jan 27 (Sat) **Terrace Falls and South Lawson Waterfalls.** Meet Hazelbrook Station 9.30. Contact Kate McManus 4758.7936. Medium. Half day.
Feb 03 (Sat) **Junction Rock.** Meet commuter carpark, Blackheath Station 9.30. Contact Meredith Brownhill 4782.4823. Medium. Steep climb out.

Walks are generally Easy to Medium Grade, unless otherwise noted. **Easy:** Mostly good surfaces, but some rough or steep sections. Suited to people of average fitness. **Medium:** Includes rough or steep sections, some of which may require clambering over natural obstacles. Discuss with leader if in doubt. **Hard:** Strenuous walks, suited to fit and experienced walkers. **If this is your first walk,** or you are in any doubt, contact the leader or Bushwalks Convener Bill Graham 4759.1692.

among tree ferns and moss covered boulders on Springwood Creek - only fifteen minutes walk from the railway station and our home - where I enjoyed several hours listening to, and watching, two magnificent lyrebirds. It was one of the most enchanting experiences I have had. It was as wild and as soul satisfying as anything I have experienced in the more remote parts of our great southern land.

Our European and Australian ancestors invented the foundation stones of human culture namely speech, symbols, tool-making and ritual, while hunting, gathering, walking, gawking and relating within their country. No doubt our ancient ancestors needed to be a lot more vigilant, creative and aware of their natural environment than we do nowadays, but when we slow

down enough to contemplate it, there really is little to stop us from going bush and increasing the quality of our own Earth-Human relationship through the pure wild and free flowing energy of it all.

Glenys and I are looking forward to the next season of walking, gawking and relating within the Blue Mountains. Our studies, seasonal celebrations and quality of life will be all the richer for this wonderful practice. Thank you BMCS. *Bob Seaborne & Glenys Livingstone.*

Membership Enquiries

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