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OUR ADVERTISERS

That we are able to produce this quarterly newsletter for members is in no small measure thanks to the continued support of our advertisers. We are most grateful to them, and would ask you to show your thanks by supporting them, please.



As yet we cannot plan any live events for The Friends. It would be great to get back together again, hear an interesting talk, enjoy a glass of wine and share our stories of the challenges faced over the past year. We will have to wait a little longer, but will be back as soon as it is safe. That means, for the second year, that we will not hold our AGM in The Orangery in April. We will publish our

2020 accounts in the summer newsletter and let you know whether we can have our AGM live in the autumn, or will meet via Zoom again. Zoom did work well last year, with plenty of you joining in, but we would rather meet face to face if we can. Until then, your trustees wish you good health and happiness.

Membership Cards and Subscriptions 2021

Those of you who use your membership cards to receive discounts when shopping with some of our Friends and Neighbours, might have noticed that the end of February is when your card expires. A new one is enclosed with this newsletter if our records show that you have paid your subscription for 2021. Your order form will be white. All subscriptions were due on 1st January except for those who joined after 1st September 2020. If we think you have not yet paid, there will be no membership card, and your order form will be green with a standing order form on the back. Over 600 of our members use standing orders as it means they never have to remember again, and it helps our treasurer too.

Or you can pay using the link on our website www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org or post a cheque, payable to The Friends of Holland Park, to Graham Franklin, 19 Campden Hill Gardens, London W8 7AX.

Alternatively, you might prefer to pay by going onto our website, www.thefriendsofhollandpark. org and pay with your credit/debit card or PayPal. This avoids the hassle and expense of finding an envelope, cheque and stamp, but cannot be combined with a standing order. You can, however, click on a very obvious yellow button if you want to add a further donation, as some of our members do.

Current minimum rates are £12, or £9 for the over 65s, with joint subscriptions available for two people at the same address for £20, or £15 where both are over 65. You will agree that these are very moderate sums, but we keep them low to enable all to join. Our

records are not infallible, so do contact Graham on 07802 761 548 or ggfranklin3@aol.com if you have a query.

However you pay, we are most grateful for your support, as it gives us clout in all our dealings with the Borough and other bodies.

Rhoddy Wood





Holland House Conservation

The contractor, Borras, took possession of the site on 14 December, and scaffolding now adorns the east wing of Holland House. RBKC's Senior Project Manager reports that roofing works are well underway, as are masonry



Holland House under repair

a charge the Council collects from new developments in the borough, with a requirement to set aside 15% of the funds to be spent on local priorities. In time, we hope we can arrange a second information board to greet visitors as they approach the house from the north.

Dutch Garden wall

repairs. The timber window frames of the east wing were very evidently in a poor state, and repairs have been started, to be followed by lead and steel window repairs in February. It is intended that work on the west and south elevations of the east wing will be completed so that scaffolding can be removed in time for erection of the opera canopy, should it be decided to have one this season. Carp in the hostel pond have been moved to a temporary tank. This is the first phase of works. Conservation of the main Holland House building will be carried out as phase 2, commencing in September 2021. Holland House will remain on Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk Register' until the work is considered to have progressed sufficiently.



New lead gutter lining on the east wing roof

Information board for Holland House

It is extraordinary that there is no information in the park to inform visitors of the great history of Holland House and the families that lived in it. The Friends have been successful in their NCIL funding bid for an information board, to be sited under the big chestnut tree at the foot of the access road to the terrace. NCIL (Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy) is Specialists have been carrying out repairs and repointing work on the wall along the north side of the Dutch Garden. Buttresses are being added, in the same style as those already in place, to strengthen the west end of the wall, which is off the straight. It is a complex project and, inevitably, work will take longer than planned. It should be finished around the time you receive this newsletter. We hope that work can then be done to give some much-needed structure to the Mediterranean Bed alongside the wall.

The Belvedere Restaurant

It is sad to learn that The Belvedere will not return to Holland Park. We are waiting to hear from the Council what they have in mind for this very special venue. Needless to say, The Friends have a view on what would, or would not, be appropriate for this prime Holland Park site.



Team working on Lord Holland's Pond

Lord Holland's Pond

Back in October, the lining of Lord Holland's Pond sprang a leak. The *i*dverde team, together with Scott and Louis, and helped by some volunteers, drained the pond and cleared out the accumulated rubbish. Once they had repaired the lining, the team replaced the plants and plant cages around the perimeter, all of which should provide an improved home for this year's tadpoles and moorhen chicks.

Jennie Kettlewell

Once again, a tree creeper was spotted in Holland Park, by two people who can be relied upon to know what bird they are looking at. It had not been seen in the park for years, but now it is back. You need sharp eyes to catch this species (Certhia familiaris) creeping up tree trunks and using its needle-like curved bill to probe for insects. It never creeps down, but drops back down to the base of another tree and starts to creep up that, using its tail as a support.

Several park visitors have reported hearing nuthatches in the park this January. Member and expert wildlife photographer, Tasso Leventis, was quick to take a photo when he spotted this chirpy chap. David Jeffreys told us he saw many redwings on the North Lawn on 22 January.

Tree creeper

Jennie Kettlewell





Nuthatch

Russell Mack

We are sad to report the death of Russell Mack last December. Russell was a quiet and private person, so members might have known his pottery better than the man. He exhibited in every one of our art exhibitions from 2010, and always sold well. In 2012, against fierce competition, he won

the 3D prize for 'Dancers', a ceramic platter hand formed with pressed and carved marks, which the judge, Isabel Langtry, considered to show a very

high standard of work. In 2014 Alison Beckett said his work stood out for the unusual shapes, and in 2017 Isabel Langtry commended his work as skilful and alluring. Your secretary succumbed to the allure one year, as this picture taken in her living room shows. The Friends are grateful that he used his

skills to support the park, and our sympathy goes to his friends and family.

Text and photo: Rhoddy Wood

Monica Castelino Confirmed as Parks Manager

One of Russell's creations

I am delighted to confirm Monica Castelino's very well deserved appointment as Parks Manager for the borough. Many might not have realised that she was working as interim Parks Manager.

Monica has worked in the borough since 2007 in a variety of roles in the Parks team. During this time she has consistently displayed a calm and practical can-do attitude and a real commitment to the parks. She also works extremely well with all the different stakeholders both inside and outside the parks. Most recently she has brought all those skills and knowledge to bear in the re-procurement of our parks contract. We are extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated officer.

Councillor Emma Will

Hi there kids

This page is for you, with fabulous things to discover about Holland Park and fun activities to do.



Eye eye bird watchers!

Can you find these words in the square below?

The words may be written from left to right, from top to bottom and some words are on a slant. Some words are written backwards, such as 'NOEGIP' for PIGEON. They are all birds you can find in Holland Park.

Words to find: robin, goldcrest, wren, mallard, heron, blackbird, parakeet, wagtail, crow, jay, moorhen, gull, thrush, pigeon, magpie.



were put outside in what is now the Rose Garden so the sun could ripen the fruit.

Be a Holland Park Detective!

Can you find this unusual tree in Holland Park. The top of its trunk is curly and twisted and leans over a wall.



Clue: The Walking Man could see this tree if he turned to the right and looked behind him.



I can jump, I can swim, I swing from tree to tree and I make a house much bigger than myself. What am I? Answer at bottom of page.

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N	н	А	А	м	D	R	I	в	к	с	А	L	в
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I	Е	н	s	0	к	R	D	R	А	L	L	Α	М
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The solution will be posted on The Friends' notice board, outside the Stable Yard.



Why is this building called The Orangery?

The owners of Holland House used to grow oranges there, that's why. It was a conservatory where orange trees in their tubs were kept during the winter. Orange trees don't like the cold. In the summer, the trees

A Guide to Identifying Raptors



wn back

Strong barring on the front

Sparrowhawk

On 12 November last year, David Darrell-Lambert, of Bird Brain UK Ltd, gave a most interesting talk on raptors for the RBKC Ecology Service. His clear identification illustrations were so helpful that we asked him if he would write something for this newsletter.

Most people find this group of birds very confusing, a dot in the sky, a quick flash of a bird, or one so close you cannot take it all in. The last is probably rarely encountered. Bird identification is normally done with just one or two features, so when you have not seen a species of bird before, or only rarely, it is important to know what you should be looking at. With a robin, for example, just saying it had a red breast lets us all know what it is.

So where do we start? There are only a few species of raptors you might see in London, so we do not have too much to worry about. When they are flying, perhaps the easiest way is to focus on the shape. Then look at patterns and how the birds fly. So, your golden gem is that a sparrowhawk will go flap, flap, glide.

Split the species into large or small. Small will be sparrowhawk, kestrel or hobby, and large will be buzzard, red kite or marsh harrier (the last one is probably the rarest in central London). Peregrine females are large, whilst the males are small. For all raptors the females are larger than the males, and the size difference can be very obvious when they are beside each other.

The images opposite are designed to guide you through the differences between a kestrel and a sparrowhawk, being the raptors you are more likely to see in Holland Park.

Remember that we cannot identify everything we see, and it is okay not to be sure what we are seeing. You do not have to name everything.

Text and illustrations: David Darrell-Lambert

In David's talk, sponsored by The Friends, he showed differences between other raptors. There is not room for all of them here, but we can show them in future newsletters.

Dark contrasting wings Barred back White superciliur Streaked front Long legs Pointed wings Rounded broad wings (fingered Tail longer than nd square looking) width of wings No mask

Kestrel

Barred underside

Medium length tail = width of wings and barred

Flight - flap, flap, glide, chase hrough wood and bushes

Uniform brown or blue grey above

Streaked

belly

Flight - hovers, glides,

hase, winnows

Black fingers and rear of

wing, brown the rest

Black tips to

long tail





Orange barred front



We have all endured an extremely challenging year. It is now time for us to look forward.

It is clear from the scientists, and with the continuing vaccination roll out, that the future is looking brighter, and at some point we will return to a new normality; sadly not in time for us to hold this year's art exhibition. From a personal perspective, creativity has been a real gift during these unsettling times, and I believe that culture and the arts will be a driving force back to a more normal way of life. The Orangery is booked for 2nd-10th April 2022, and we know that there is a very promising future for the tradition of our exhibition to continue and flourish.

I will sign off with one of my paintings of Holland Park in spring. IT WILL RETURN. Also a small selection of images from past exhibitions for you all to enjoy revisiting.

Stay safe and continue to be creative.

Gordon French Photos by Alessia







None of us yet knows when meetings will be possible in public and when the Ecology Service will be able to restart its annual programme of interesting walks and talks. Dates and subjects have been planned and, if Covid-19 restrictions prevent them from taking place in person, the gap will be filled with a series of on-line talks. All the events below are funded by The Friends, and this allows participation at no cost.

Dawn Chorus Bird Walk. Sat. 24 April.

Led by professional ornithologist, David Darrell-Lambert. Learn why birds sing and how to identify common species by their songs and calls. Please bring a pair of binoculars.

Meet 5 am in Abbotsbury Road Car Park, Holland Park. Finish 7 am. Booking essential.

wild plants.

Booking essential.

Spring Botany Walk. Thurs. 29 April.



Lesser celandine

Spring Bat Walk. Wed. 5 May.

Led by an expert from the London Bat Group. Find bats in Holland Park to learn more about their life cycle and how we can help their conservation. Bat detectors provided, but please bring a torch with you. *Meet 8.30 pm at the Holland Park Ecology Centre.*

Finish 10 pm. Booking essential. The event is free, but donations to the London Bat Group are welcome.



Led by expert botanist, Dr Mark Spencer. Improve your

identification skills and expand

your knowledge of a range of

Meet 6 pm at the Holland Park Ecology Centre. Finish 7.30 pm.

Common pipistrelle

New! Leaf Identification Workshops on-line.

Over six weeks Bettina Metcalfe, a tree expert, will help us learn how to recognise and identify commonly planted park tree species through using their leaves as the main diagnostic feature.



Acer platanoides leaves

She will cover a mixture of native and ornamental tree species, all of which can be found in Holland Park. Workshops start at 6.30 pm on the following Tuesdays and last for one hour:

11, 18 and 25 May. 1, 8 and 15 June. Booking essential. Please e-mail ecology.centre@rbkc. gov.uk and you will be sent the link.

Summer Tree Walk: The Basics. Thurs. 17 June.

Led by one of the Ecology Team, this walk gives a basic introduction to some of the native tree species found in Holland Park. We will use leaves, bark and fruit to identify trees at family and species level.

Meet 6.30 pm at the Holland Park Ecology Centre. Finish 8 pm. Booking essential.



Birch between the Dutch and Iris Gardens

These walks and talks are aimed at an adult audience, but keen and interested children over 10 are welcome when accompanied by an adult. Please do not bring dogs to these events as they might scare off wildlife. To book events please e-mail ecology.centre@rbkc.gov.uk or call 020 7938 8186. Check the website www.rbkc.gov.uk/ecology for up-to-date information.

Mimosa

Since reading the article on acacias in the last newsletter, Friend Martin Ingell has been monitoring the development of the flower buds on the mimosa (*Acacia dealbata*) on the fountain side of the Belvedere. By February 7 he was able to take this picture of the first fully open flowers. Next we hope you will all watch for the flowers of the Oven's Wattle (*Acacia pravissima*) at the bottom of the Rose Garden, which are due in about April.



Rhoddy Wood

idverde Wins Parks Contract





The parks management contract, held by *i*dverde expires on 31 March 2021. The Council was required to put the contract out to tender, and followed a rigorous procurement process that invited and assessed competitive tenders. This twelve-month process was designed to



idverde and Park Management teams celebrating their award

establish which contractor offered the best parks maintenance service, both in terms of quality and value for money. The contract covers 90 parks and green spaces in the borough and is for horticultural work, grass cutting, path sweeping, general cleaning, sports bookings and a number of other services.

The procurement process started with public consultation, to which some of The Friends contributed, and proceeded through three stages, with bidders' detailed responses to the brief at each stage. The procurement team read some 600+ pages of documents per stage. This team was made up of specialists in relevant disciplines: parks management, law, insurance, sustainability, finance, communications and procurement, as well as a representative of The Friends on behalf of borough park users. Eunomia, specialists in procurement, provided independent oversight to ensure the whole exercise was robust and fair.

Tessa Lee of Eunomia reported that: "The procurement process, using the Competitive Procedure with Negotiation procedure, is one of the most robust and detailed we have run for a grounds maintenance contract. Monica Castelino (RBKC Parks Manager) and the team put in a huge amount of work ensuring the initial documents were well written and the requirements conveyed clearly to bidders. During the process the team answered all clarification questions from bidders quickly and clearly, which was crucial to keeping to the tight timescales of the project. After the initial stages, the project board decided, after careful consideration, to continue to negotiation and the final tender stage. This decision proved very successful as the requirements and priorities of the Authority were clearly outlined to bidders in meetings leading to large improvements in the final tenders. In summary, the whole RBKC team has worked extremely hard the past year, in tough circumstances, to ensure the best solution for the Authority. We have very

much enjoyed working with such a dedicated and hardworking team and wish RBKC and the Friends all the best for the new contract."

Bids were anonymous in the documentation and were scored against 21 criteria. Of all the competitive tenders, *i*dverde had the highest score and have been awarded the contract. This decision was approved by the RBKC Leadership Team on 9 December 2020. It was also agreed that *i*dverde should renew its various leases in connection with the parks, including the lease for the plant nursery in Holland Park.

What happens next? Well, it is not just more of the same. The new contract includes greater emphasis on horticulture, social value, carbon reduction, biodiversity, community engagement and technology. Different performance standards have been set to provide more clarity for all. There will be an additional post for a training and community manager and an enhanced volunteer programme. The new contract starts on 1 April 2021.

Ben Binnell, idverde's contract director said: 'We are delighted to have been awarded the Kensington and Chelsea contract. It was the toughest bid that I have been involved with and I look forward to many years of protecting the green assets on behalf of Kensington and Chelsea residents and appropriately improving the biodiversity and maintenance of these.'

Jennie Kettlewell



Albert Schweitzer said: 'Never say there is nothing beautiful in the world anymore. There is always something to make you wonder, in the shape of a tree, the trembling of a leaf.' So many of us value the wonderful trees we have in Holland Park, from the leafy shade of the woodlands, to the exotic species dotted all over the park. We enjoy them now, and must make a huge effort to ensure future generations have the same privilege.

Our woodlands are not ancient, were all planted at the same time, and are 'wearing out' at the same

time. It is simplistic to say we should just plant more trees. We need an informed plan to guide us on what to remove, what to plant and where to plant it, so that we retain viable habitats for the many species of plants, small mammals, birds, butterflies, insects and amphibians we enjoy in the



Bluebells in Holland Park

park. We also need to think about trees that will survive and thrive in our changing, yo-yo climate.

The first stage is to carry out a thorough assessment of the ecological value of the woodland habitat, within each woodland enclosure, and for the woodlands as a whole. The Friends have agreed to fund a detailed survey of habitat classification, structure and composition, including a drone survey. Where possible, findings will be classified in accordance with National Vegetation types,



Woodlands in Holland Park

with consideration of suitability to support appropriate flora and fauna. The project will take place this spring, because it is the best time to establish what 'indicator' plants are present, i.e. plants that help determine what will grow best in the area. It is also the best time to discover invasive species that might hijack the habitat if not dealt with. Together with updated species surveys (bird, bat, wildflower etc.), this will provide a sound context for the next stage, a Woodland Management Plan, which gives a structured guide to planning and organising the sustainable

management of our woodlands.

That would be a significant achievement and is a good reason for The Friends to fund the project.

Jennie Kettlewell

Did you know?

During the pandemic, trees apparently grew faster than usual. Scientists think it might be something to do with lower pollution levels due to reduced traffic during the Covid-19 lockdown. Little hard information is available, but no doubt someone will follow up with research, and we hope to hear more.



Fox in Holland Park



I have been going to Holland Park almost every afternoon since the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions started. For one thing I have to fill the bird feeders regularly, that is to say, the birdfeeder, since the other one has been too damaged by squirrels. The remaining feeder has been half chewed away too, so that one can only fill it to halfway up, which means having to fill it more frequently than before. Once I found a squirrel inside one of the feeders. I was flabbergasted because I could not see how it could have got inside the cage. But



Damaged bird feeder

then as I got closer the squirrel panicked and squeezed out of one of the narrow gaps by completely flattening its body. I had only ever seen this phenomenon once before when a mouse flattened its body in order to squeeze under a door only about a centimetre from the floor. Incredible: their skeletons are obviously made in a sort of 'flat pack' way.

The park being filled every day now with people who perhaps have not visited many parks before, one sees them in places where they are not intended to be. Earlier in the year, when Lord Holland's Pond was covered in bright green duckweed, it was very amusing to see a young boy jumping onto what he presumably thought was grass, only to find himself knee-deep in water. He took it quite calmly.

My most exciting sighting was that of a white stork flying over the park on 17 June. I was walking uphill in the wooded area, and I don't know what made me look up at that moment, but when I did, the stork was just flying east across a gap in the trees directly above me. Having seen them featured on 'Springwatch' and also as a child when visiting my grandfather in North Germany, I knew at once what it was. The White Stork Project were glad to hear of my sighting, and asked me for the nearest postcode to it so that they could log it onto their database.

In the summer, on my way to the bird feeder, I found a very expensive smartphone lying on the grass. It was switched on so that I could see that the writing on the screen was in French, but the leather backing of the phone had the union jack on it: presumably it belonged to a French tourist who had just bought the cover here. I left it with the parks police and found out later that the owner had phoned to her lost phone and then been able

to collect it. What surprised me was that she had apparently been amazed that the finder had not just pocketed it.

Joy Puritz



White stork

New Discount Offer for The Friends (once Covid-19 regulations allow)

THREADS Hair & Beauty

This laid-back hair and beauty salon has its own coffee bar where you can relax and enjoy freshly roasted coffee, juices and snacks. Treatments include hair cutting, styling and colouring as well as facials, manicures and pedicures.

Threads & Co is the brainchild of Australian born entrepreneur and make-up artist Matthew Bartell. Its sister company, Threads Beauty Ltd, was launched in 2009, with threading and nail bar concessions in various department stores and fashion stores in Ireland. We will all need a little pampering once pandemic rules allow it, and this relaxing environment is just the answer.



256 Kensington High Street, London W8 6ND. For more information, visit www.threadsandco.co.uk or call 020 3903 7272.

Offer: 10% off hair and beauty treatments



Spring 2021

Kensington Gardeners' Club

The club provides a programme of talks by Zoom during the pandemic. To participate, e-mail susan.vannoorden@ntlworld.com

Tues. 9 March, 2.30pm: Join Nancy Stevens as she leads a journey through Japanese gardens. This talk is offered free for Friends of KGC.

Fri. 9 April, 2.30pm: Dr David Marsh, Garden Historian, on "The opposite of Chelsea - garden festival of Chaumont-sur-Loire."

Proposed events, to be confirmed, depending on the pandemic. Further information from www.kensingtongardeners.co.uk, or please contact 020 7727 3897.

April: Coach trip to Exbury Gardens, Hampshire.

May: Visit to gardens and grounds of Pitzhanger Manor, Ealing.

June: Coach trip to Parham House and gardens, West Sussex.

Opera Holland Park

Safety is a priority, and performances will be staged within government guidelines, which might mean limited audience numbers and adapted theatre space.

Further information from www.operahollandpark.com Tickets will be available from 0300 999 1000

1, 4, 10, 12, 16, 18, 22, 24 & 26 June at 7.15pm, **The Marriage of Figaro** by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 14 June at 7.15pm, Young Artist performances 26 June at 2pm, Young Artist performances 20 June at 2pm, Discovery Matinee and Relaxed Performance 16 & 22 June at 12pm, Schools Matinee Performances

5, 7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 19, 23, 25 & 29 June at 7.30pm, **La Traviata** by Giuseppi Verdi 19 June at 2pm, Discovery Matinee and Relaxed Performance

13, 15, 17, 21, 23, 28 & 30 July at 7.30pm, **The Cunning Little Vixen** by Leoš Janáček 25 July at 2pm, Discovery Matinee and Relaxed Performance

16, 20, 22, 24, 27, 29 & 31 July at 8pm, **L'amico Fritz** by Pietro Mascagni 18 July at 2pm, Discovery Matinee and Relaxed Performance

3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 August at 7.30pm, **The Pirates of Penzance** by Gilbert and Sullivan Co-production with Charles Court Opera

August 2021, British Youth Opera, Performance and booking dates tbc

The Kensington Society

Events are currently on hold, until pandemic restrictions are lifted. Further information on www.kensingtonsociety.org/events

RBKC Active for Life

Full details on www.rbkc.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/sport-and-leisure, or ring 020 7938 8182. A varied programme of physical activities in Kensington, from gentle walks to sport will take place when government Covid-19 guidelines for safety allow.



The pandemic has been tough for retailers, and the businesses that are part of our discount offer scheme are having as tough a time as any. At the time of writing, restaurants are closed, but most of our participants are able to offer a take-away service. Miles & Miles respect advice on essential travel only, but cars can be booked on request. You can place orders on line for some of the businesses. Government advice might change before our summer newsletter reaches you. In the meantime, please visit websites, or ring to check what is on offer. Please do support these wonderful businesses in our community.

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ULI Restaurant	Tel: 020 3141 5878	www.ulilondon.com



Greetings card, with paintings on both back and front, but blank inside. includes envelope. 105 x 148 mm

£2.50 each.

Available from:

- Holland Park Reception in The Stable Yard
- Via the order form
- Order on-line on www.thefriendsofhollandpark.org +P&P

Cotton tea towel £6.50





The Friends would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the Parks Police for working even harder than usual to help keep park visitors safe during the challenge of the pandemic. You are appreciated.

The cover photo was taken in the Napoleon Garden on 16 April 2020 by Andrew Duguid.

Parks Police

Holland Park is generally a safe place, but we should never be complacent.

If you see any antisocial behaviour, such as vandalism, please contact the Parks Police on:

0300 3655 101

Remember three key points:

- Keep yourself out of danger
- Take a description of the person, location and exactly what they are doing
- Contact the Parks Police and report <u>the</u> <u>facts</u>.



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