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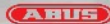
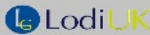
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FROM THE EDITOR

THIS LOCKDOWN has its upsides as well as its downsides. No honestly it does. I've probably done more in the garden already this year than I have in any other year – and The Boss and I have lived in Buckland since 1984. Walking the dog has become a relief not a chore, I've had time to think about the book I've been writing for the past who knows how many years (that's THINKING about it not actually writing it though I have knocked down two Berlin wall sized mental blocks), I have binge watched Vera and Midsomer Murders, I'm doing some much needed painting and decorating and, the biggest plus of all, have only been to Sainsbury's once!

Mind you, even standing in the carpark long queue then was almost a pleasure, the atmosphere between customers was ever so friendly, the staff were terrific and we were in and out pretty quickly.

The downsides? Apart from the obvious of course. Have missed being with the family though we have been able to talk to our three year old grandson via Facetime, can't simply nip out and buy some plants and other stuff from the garden centre, and, of course, our holiday in the fantabulous Isles of Scilly has been cancelled.

As a result, this issue is a special one. Very little to report from our Five Alive villages so instead we're using the space to share with everybody the beauty this wonderful Spring weather has brought with it. MANY thanks to everyone who has sent us photos and sincere apologies to those whose pictures aren't included. Choosing which to use has been one of the biggest challenges I have faced as 5Alive editor.

Hope you enjoy it – we MAY not have a June issue so the copy deadline at the foot of this page is just a guide. We'll try and let everybody know what's happening but do contact Lin or me for more information.

Meanwhile, PLEASE read and take note of the appeal from our farming community.

Without them, and of course what they produce, we would be in dead trouble – and I mean dead.

STAY SAFE! Peter

FROM THE RECTORY

Life begins with small beginnings. Live life when you have it. Life is a splendid gift – there is nothing small about it.

“So never lose an opportunity of urging a practical beginning, however small, for it is wonderful how often in such matters the mustard-seed germinates and roots itself.”

Florence Nightingale

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Advertising: Peter Corbett, 01373 466536, mellsmag@hotmail.com

Deadline for June 2020 is May 15th (but do check)

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 cliveatmellsgroup@gmail.com, twitter @clivetherev
 Benefice administrator Tracy Hughes tracyhughes523@yahoo.com

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SITTING OUT IN OUR GARDEN of late, we have witnessed the new beginning of a family of blackbirds nesting in a bush just a few feet from our patio. The adults are very busy feeding their young with what seems like endless supplies of worms. These little fledglings are completely dependent on the adults. For us they are an example of hope and new life around us. Their dependence is very much like those in intensive care suffering from the coronavirus. And yet, tirelessly they bring food for their young just like we are doing in our own homes and as we reach out to others.

In our villages, during this crisis, there have been many small acts of generosity and kindness. This strikes at the very heart of what it is to be human as life begins with small beginnings. In my reflections (mellsgroup.church/holyweekeaster/mells-group-reflections) there is an overwhelming sense of folk reaching out to help others.

In a wider context, we have many who are delivering essential services to keep the nation going and that includes our farmers. Each Thursday we continue pay tribute to all these folk.

On May 12th we remember Florence Nightingale, whose life and work exemplifies the caring profession's extraordinary vocation just like every member of the NHS and every carer today. It is a fitting tribute to her that the emergency hospital opening at the ExCel Centre in London is called the NHS Nightingale Hospital.

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Florence Nightingale was born 200 years ago, on May 12th 1820. Best known as the Lady with the Lamp who saved many lives in the hospitals of the Crimean War, she was also a social reformer, a statistician and the founder of modern nursing.



She was named after the Italian city of her birth, but the family moved back to England the following year, and she was brought up in Derbyshire. Here – and elsewhere – she had several experiences that she believed were calls from God to devote her life to the service of others. She never married, but among her several close friends was Sidney Herbert, who became Secretary of War and helped to make her work in Crimea possible. Some claim that she reduced the death rate in hospitals there from 42percent to two per-

cent. She introduced hand-washing and other hygiene improvements, but she never claimed personal credit for reducing the death rate.

Her work inspired nurses in the American Civil War, and in 1883 she became the first recipient of the Royal Red Cross. In 1907, she was the first woman to be awarded the Order of Merit. She died in 1910. Her image appeared on the reverse of £10 banknotes issued by the Bank of England from 1975 until 1994.

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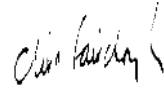
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Friends, as we are in the midst of this crisis may we urge each other to focus on the lamp of faith of Florence Nightingale which shone into the darkness of the places of anxiety and suffering.

Heavenly Father, help us to draw strength from the deepest wells of our souls and pray that the risen Christ will be that little flame in our hearts and the hearts of those who are suffering at this time.



SUPPORTING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

A series of reflections on how to cope with anxiety and loneliness in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, including simple Christian meditation techniques and five tips, have been published by the Church of England.

A number of actions that could help people feeling isolated or worried, as well as those who grieve, are put forward in a new guide Supporting Good Mental Health and written by Durham University academic Revd Professor Chris Cook with Ruth Rice Director of the Christian mental health charity 'Renew Wellbeing'.

APPEAL FROM LOCAL FARMERS

We appreciate that everyone needs to get out into the countryside. We are incredibly lucky to have some wonderful countryside on our doorsteps. BUT.....

Right now, our crops are in full production mode - even grass fields.

Please, please could we ask that you keep to the footpaths only.

On a daily basis now, we see people walking and running (even cycling) anywhere they please. This is not fair and not allowed.

And also, please don't run through any fields with livestock in them. The animals do not understand and go into flight mode. It is totally unnecessary to frighten farm animals in this way.

And I won't even mention dog poo - you know what you should be doing.

Thank you!

BUCKLAND CHURCH NEWS

In these strange times we were unable to hold the Easter Service at St. Michael's but Father Clive is continuing via Zoom to hold a service every Sunday so if you

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are able to connect and join him he would be very pleased to welcome you. For further details please contact any member of the PCC. So many positive things have happened to brighten our days in isolation. Thank goodness for telephones and internet, friends and relatives are talking, texting and in this amazing village so much help is offered to those of us unable to get out and shop. We have had some beautiful weather, there is much less traffic on the road through the village, the birds are singing and the blossom is on the trees. I have also heard how many of you are completing all those jobs you have put off doing. It often takes a disaster such as this coronavirus to make us all remember how precious life and the environment are; hopefully when this is all behind us we will continue to appreciate our National Health Service staff, the council workers, shop assistants and all who have contributed to keeping us safe. Keep well and safe.

Jill Wright

WHATLEY PARISH COUNCIL - NEW EMAIL ADDRESS

Whatley Parish Council now has an email address:- clerk.whatleyparishcouncil@gmail.com. The old email address, (parishcouncils.frome@gmail.com), will be monitored indefinitely to ensure that nothing is missed, but if you could send all future correspondence to the email above, it would be appreciated. The next planned meeting is Wednesday May 27th.

Joy Book, Clerk to Whatley Parish Council, Tel: 07704 584953

CHANTRY AND WHATLEY IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

We realised in Chantry and Whatley in mid-March that events were moving rapidly, and that we needed to make efforts to connect up the residents of our villages, so that we were as well-prepared as possible locally to cope with what was



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to come. This was before the lock-down, and none of us had any real idea of the strange times that lay ahead.

So a group of us delivered letters door-to-door, and set up an email group (with help from the Whatley and Chantry Community Association) to reach as many local people as possible. We supplied the contact details of volunteers who could provide help to those needing support. These efforts quickly grew and lots of wonderful people came forward to offer help with everything from shopping to collecting prescriptions to dog-walking and gardening. Emails from our Helping Hands group now go out every few days to about 110 people, providing information on all these topics, and putting people in touch with each other. We send out details of all the excellent local businesses who are now delivering essential supplies - food, drink, pet-food, newspapers and even ice-cream from the lovely Palette and Pasture at Trudoxhill. Sightings are reported of elusive items like bread flour and eggs, and we provide valuable updates from organisations like the Frome Medical Practice and Somerset Waste Partnership. We now have a "village swap-shop" section in every Helping Hands email, and have succeeded in finding good homes for lots of spare items, and meeting needs for equipment such as computers for home-schooling and bikes for outdoor exercise. Plants, books, DVDs, sourdough starters and DIY supplies are swapped around the villages, all with the appropriate hygiene precautions! As none of us can go to the tip any longer, this is especially useful for those making use of time in lock-down to have a good clear-out, or complete a project.



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Our local medics have been very helpful in providing health guidance for circulation. We're also in close touch with Whatley Parish Council, who keep us informed on briefings from Somerset and Mendip councils, and the services available such as grants for local businesses.

We've made good use of the Whatley and Chantry Facebook page to put the word out about what's going on locally: this also makes it easy to share helpful information coming from lots of other groups and organisations on social media.

One popular initiative has been our weekly pop-up shop, provided on Thursday afternoons by Cam Valley Foods at the Parish Field in Whatley and the churchyard in Chantry. They bring us fresh milk, eggs, cheese, sausages, bacon and ham, fresh vegetables and lots of other goodies, and are much appreciated by local people who can't now get out to the shops. They also give us all a chance to socialise with our neighbours for a little while in the safely-spaced queues!

Another chance to set eyes on our neighbours comes with the regular Thursday night clapping for the NHS at 8 p.m, which is well-supported locally.

Broadband services in Chantry and Whatley are still as inadequate as ever, which is unfortunate now we are all so reliant on the internet to stay in touch with friends and family, and to order supplies. Many of us are looking forward to the promised arrival of Truespeed and full-fibre broadband before too long!

A useful WiFi hub has recently been installed in Chantry church, funded by the Whatley Common Good Trust, and has proved invaluable as a back-up service when drop-outs occur. Although the church is sadly now closed, the connection can be accessed from outside and the porch – contact Vivienne Pay or Jan Bramston (see



The advertisement features three children in black t-shirts and pants standing on a grey floor against a dark background. The child in the middle is pointing upwards towards a speech bubble that says "NOW I WANT TO STAND OUT!". The child on the left has a speech bubble that says "I used to want to FIT in...". In the top right corner of the image area is a circular logo that says "OFSTED REGISTERED".

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below) for further details.

So although life is greatly changed for many of us (perhaps not so much the retired!) and there is obviously a background of anxiety about the national situation, and our neighbours, friends and family who are far away and perhaps vulnerable, we seem to be coping in Chantry and Whatley as well as we can under the difficult circumstances. Lots of people have commented about the increased sense of community and solidarity, and have been grateful for all the help provided by kind neighbours.

We all appreciate even more our good fortune in living in such a beautiful part of the country, especially in such glorious weather as we've seen this spring.

The initial contact points for the Helping Hands group are as follows: please get in touch with any of us if you would like to offer help or need support of any kind. If you'd like to join the email mailing list, contact Vivienne, or for Parish Council business, contact Jane.

And whatever you think about Facebook, do please consider joining the Whatley and Chantry group just for the duration!

Chantry, Jan Bramston – janicebramston@hotmail.com, 01373-836513, 07938983409.

Vivienne Pay – viviennepay@gmail.com, 01373-836571, 07443-517488

Whatley, Jane Butcher – jane.thorne@zen.co.uk, 01373-837259, 07939-077088

Peter Lugg – peter@peterlugg.co.uk, 01373-836613, 07970-212987.

WELCOME!!!

And congratulations to Pamela and Anthony Robinson of Chantry, whose baby girl Charlotte Elodie was born on April 22nd, a little sister for Freddie.



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For Ron Biggs

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Entreated by my mother, Jo, to
Stop such languishing,
And grow.
Here are gifts from Anne in multitude.
And Janet.
Hints of my father's mending.
Glimpses of inventions that surprise me
still.
A place my grandfather belonged is
This space a red and white rose once
climbed.
Site only.
Many more I know or half remember.
And where are you?

No longer in the early morning lanes,
dog happy,
Facing the weather.
Nor visiting your care in gardens,
There and there.
Tying sweet peas. Just so.
Marking furrows on the grass.
Here in this grounded plot,
Still though you are.
The long yew hedge, my mother said.
Make it a
Cloud.
Follow the shape of its bidding.
Here in that very spot.
That crinkle crankle hedge
Remembers your art.
The part you played,
The gift you made.
Tomorrow, and the day after.

LB

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R I P MOLLY HADEN

Sadly "Molly from Mells" died suddenly on April 1st after a long time of declining health. I call her "Molly from Mells", even though she has been living in Holcombe for ten years, because I feel sure others across our five parishes will be remembering her as that too!

After Molly retired from her work as a milk recorder visiting dairy farms, and perhaps earlier in the 30 years while she lived in New Street in Mells, she had all sorts of voluntary interests locally. Just a few that stand out in my memory are obviously involvement with the church, the Girls Guide Association and Riding for the Disabled, but also many other things like leading holiday clubs for children; chairing the Mells Daffodil Festival committee, driving hospital cars, organizing dog shows on the playing field and raising various funds through coffee mornings and all sorts of sales. Some of you probably remember a lot more and, in the first years that she was in Holcombe, she continued in similar way.

She had no relatives but she had four really big loves in life – one was walking in our countryside and the other three were horses, cows and her dogs, with the main passion being for border terriers. Those four loves gave her the idea for one of the best this she left us. It was her initiative, back in the early 90s, to start leading a group of locals to get out and walk together on Saturday afternoons. That inspiration continues today as the Walking on Saturdays Group.

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Contact us now!

Thank you, Molly, for that idea and for all the other time you have given to the communities around you.

Molly's funeral will have been held very privately on 22 April but a memorial service will be held later when it is safe to do so

Pauline Short, Buckland Dinham

RIP BARRY PITCHER

It is with sadness the family of Barry Pitcher share the news of his death in late March after a long battle with cancer and Alzheimer's disease.

Barry was born in Bristol, but always loved the outdoor life. During his childhood he spent days on his grandparents' farm which decidedly moulded his future life as a dairy farmer. He married Doreen in 1958. After learning his trade by working on farms Doreen and Barry took on a Somerset County Council farm on the outskirts of Frome. They both worked very hard long hours during those years.

On retirement they moved to Buckland Dinham and made up for all the years of no holidays by travelling the world.

Barry spent a lot of time helping to raise money to bring some of the children born in the Chernobyl area over to Frome for a summer holiday, to be thoroughly spoilt for a few weeks. One of these children still sends a Christmas card every year.

He supported Somerset Cricket Club and Frome History Society and liked nothing more than a family gathering, watching his five grandchildren and five great grandchildren

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playing. the family plan a Thanksgiving Service for his life in the church, (hopefully), on September 26th.

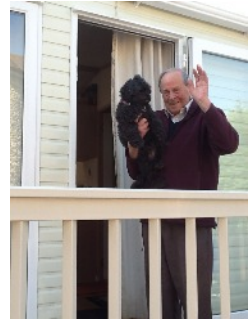
AND A THANK YOU FROM BILL SAVAGE

I'm nicely settled in Chantry now at my daughter's place and although we initially found the weekly shop a problem, I'm pleased to say your advert in 5 Alive explaining that Jack Harrington from Whatley could help with shopping at ASDA saved the day. Both Jack and his fiancé Stella proved invaluable in helping me with shopping for the weekly needs, and I made two new friends.

It does show what a fine example it is of local communication, especially at a time of great national trauma. Even though I had moved, there was our dear and friendly 5Alive magazine providing a helpful hand.

My kind regards and thanks to you and my many other friends at Buckland Dinham.

Bill Savage



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JOTTINGS FROM A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

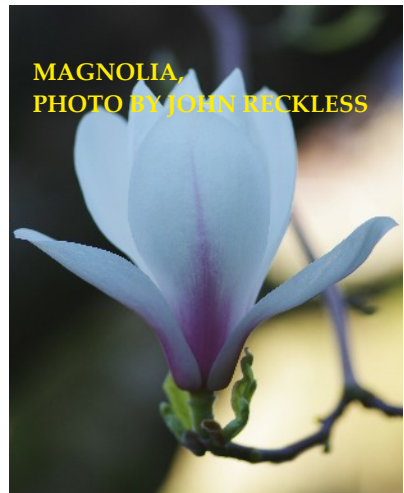
WHAT A STRANGELY ALTERED WORLD we have been suddenly plunged into. None of the events planned for April has taken place and goodness knows when we can plan anything with certainty. But in spite of the problems, griefs and hardships which this horrid virus has caused there has been an explosive outpouring of kindness and real heroism among our communities. The media in its many forms is full of such acts and I, personally, have had so many kind telephone calls and offers of help from neighbours I do feel that when at last we come through this thing we shall all be stronger and more generous and compassionate and may well have learned that we can live happily with far less of the things which previously we considered necessary.

I am writing this during the wonderful weather of the Easter weekend. How ironic that when we have the best Easter weather for many years none of us can go out to enjoy it. Those of us who have gardens are so very fortunate and we must spare thought for those in town flats where isolation must be so much harder to bear.

The unmowed churchyard is a golden carpet of celandines which glow fluorescently in the sunshine. They really do glow and if you look closely at a celandine you can see why. Each petal is coated in what looks like high gloss enamel which reflects the sun. Astonishing, magical, miraculous, however you like to think of it.

The current warm weather has unfurled the leaves on the 40-50ft balsam poplar in my orchard and the air – and the house - is loaded with the heady spicy perfume that the oily leaves release when newly opened. Standing beneath the tree, the sticky leaf cases sticking to the dogs' paws and the strange long caterpillar-like grey and yellow scarlet tipped catkins dropping on and around us, the scent is almost dizzy making. And it travels a long distance around; I can still smell it when I cross the road to post letters in the box opposite my gate.

Coinciding with this good weather the magnolias and camellias are at their flamboyant perfection, mine, luckily this year having escaped any seasonal frost and gales. Those of us who, like myself, have acid soil can revel in these beauties which can grow 12-15ft tall and wide. Those with alkaline soil can, of course, grow these treasures in containers. They are about the only thing I can grow with profusion in my shady garden and once they finish flowering I have to be content with ferns and various ground cover plants (and weeds, of course). The best and most vigorous ground cover is the vinca which I stole from the Bishop's Palace garden in Wells, more than 20



years ago. One tiny three inch thread has now romped all over the empty spaces. It is a variety I have never seen elsewhere – large rich purple flowers with narrow separated petals like little spoked wheels. I suppose I shouldn't have admitted stealing this but anyway, sadly dear Bishop Big Jim is no longer around to apologise to and anyway it just sort of happened that a tiny bit got hooked into my pocket when I stooped to admire it all those years ago.

A wildlife minded friend suggested a solution to the question of what might have killed, plucked and removed the hen pheasant in the churchyard which I mentioned last month. He said he had seen a sparrowhawk kill a large pigeon which he found too heavy to lift. He plucked and ate enough to make the remainder carryable, thus cleverly distributing the weight, some inside the sparrowhawk, the rest transportable. I agreed that the pheasant might have been treated likewise.

So one mystery solved but today I have discovered another. The stone walls of my old converted stables have had odd holes patched over their 180 years, occasionally even with the odd brick or half brick. Just such a hole is above the bracket where my peanut and fat balls feeders hang. This morning one of the half bricks (which had always appeared quite secure) was on the ground below the hole and the remaining half brick was pock-marked with what looked like peck marks. I often have woodpeckers on the

feeders. Could I now have brick peckers?



The dawn chorus is, of course, at its peak now. Such an uplifting joy around 5.30, although I have to confess to dozing off again afterwards most days. No cockerels around here so the wake-up call is down to the pheasant's rusty croak followed by the harsh crows' call and then the gentle wood pigeon. Then all the musicians follow – thrush, blackbird, all the small familiar ones and the migrants, wood warblers, garden warblers and all the "little brown jobs" that I am not good at recognising. All combined in a glorious orchestra of sound punctuated by the original pheasant, crow and pigeon like a sort of Greek chorus in the background.

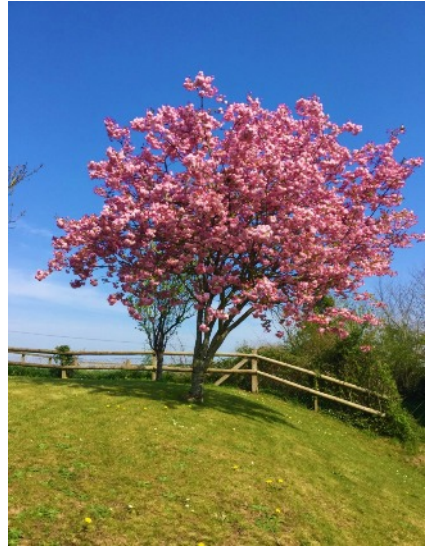
Well, I do hope we all managed to celebrate our very different Easter week-end in ways that brought comfort and hope. However our own lives may have changed during these strange times we can rely on the unchanging cycle of the seasons and the natural life around us through God's grace in maintaining His constant never ending renewal of life.

I hope to see you all again in June if Peter and Lin manage to produce 5-Alive in these difficult times. Meanwhile, stay safe and do take advantage of any willing offers of help where needed. And many, many thanks to those so bravely and generously offering help.

God bless us all *Hazell*



It's not just us humans who are having a 'lockdown clear out' as Jane Butcher found when she spotted all of this debris at the entrance to a badger's sett (left)



Jenny Holmes entitles this photo 'Tree of Hope'

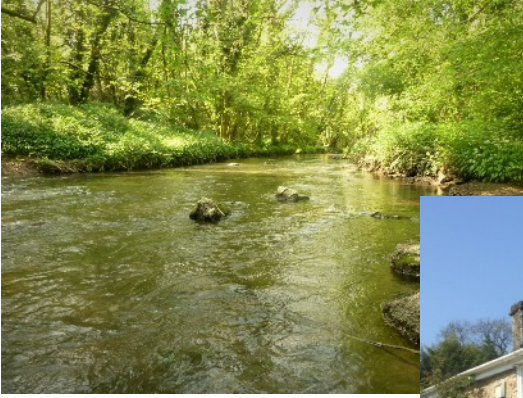


And this little chick from Chantry is, by happy coincidence, called 'Hope'.



Life in and around a small garden pond at Vallis Manor (left) , the home of Roger and Christiane Willsher, while Phil Taylor focuses on the hellebore in his back garden and Hugh Johnson mixes tulips and topiary in his.



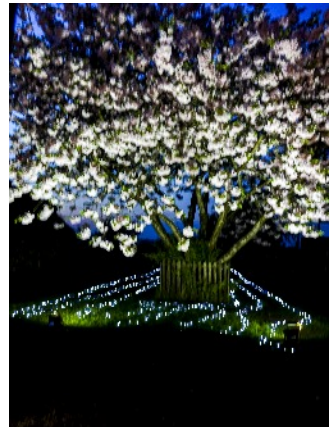


Jim Duffus sent us this photo of Mells Brook while Vivienne Pay snapped wisteria at its finest in Chantry.

Richard Swann was out with his camera when he spotted this tree trunk. Can you see the rabbit in it - or is it just me?



Neil Lanning captured this delightful image of the tree in the garden at the Bell Inn, lit at the suggestion of his neighbours Jules and Phil.



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