

April 2011



Biddip

Newsletter of the Toodyay Friends of the River

Volume 5, Issue 1



Boating party on the Avon River, c.1895-1900.

From left to right in the boat: Charlotte Donegan, Angela Connor, Bertha Piesse, Edith McCombie, Eva Monger, Alfred Piesse, Chandos Pole, Maud Donegan. On the bank: George Piesse and Mr. Lukin.

A copy of this photograph was owned by Dudley Donegan.

(Source: Alf Thomas, *A History of Toodyay*, Toodyay Road Board, 1949, p.16.)

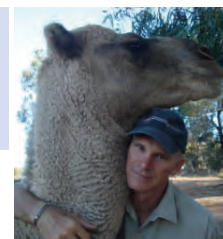
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1836 - 2011
175th Anniversary of settlement
in the Toodyay District.

The Friends of
the River wish to
acknowledge
the Department
of Water for on-
going support in
printing our
newsletter

The Presidents Camel



This issue of “Biddip” is timely as it is an opportunity to give a half yearly report. It has been a period of both highs and lows but always plenty of activity. In the interests of saving space, here is a chronology of events since last year’s AGM.

SEPT ’10: Burning of the Tamarix wood piles in the river. Spraying of fire breaks, weed control and walk trail maintenance in Lloyd Reserve. Firebreak spraying/maintenance and weed control for member’s river-side property.

OCT ’10: TFOR represented at the four day inspirational and informative International River Symposium held at Burswood. The signing of the Harper Brook fencing and re-vegetation agreement.

NOV ’10: Well attended BBQ breakfast and “TFORward RIVERVISION” power point presentation. Preparation of funding applications.

DEC ’10: Commencement of Harper Brook re-vegetation fence. Submission of two Wheat Belt Natural Resource Management (WBNRM) funding applications.

JAN ’11: The completion of 3,000 mts of deep ripping at the Harper Brook project site. Planning day with clear message from attendees ...“give us hands on and project work!!” Funding success for Millard’s Pool picnic shelter and information signage. The departure of Bern Kelly from the Department of Water (DOW) Northam Office.

FEB ’11: First working bee for the year with finishing off work completed on Harper Brook fence. Surveying of Millard’s Pool sites. Community member requested river bank hazard reduction work done.

MARCH ’11: TFOR well represented at Clean up Australia Day. Re-location of TFOR sign in Duidgee Park and agreement on new design and wording with funding provided by DoW. Successful 175th Year Shire budget request for new signage etc. **LLOYD RESERVE** - On site assessments with Mike Allen (DoW) Alan Knapp (Shire Ranger), Bethan Lloyd, Greencorp, Wayne, Desrae and Gaven. Scheduling of fire break grading and cool burning. Launch of the hazard reduction and development project at the working bee. Survey of Red Banks Pool potential bird hide/”Duidgee Track” sites. Repair of cut fence.

SOME THANKYOU’S:

BERN KELLY, MARTIN REVELL and MIKE ALLEN of DoW NORTHAM for assistance, encouragement, the use of equipment, (especially the quad bike) and for time allocated to TFOR projects. **MICHAEL FERGUSON and ROSS IRONSIDE of VERNICE** for the superb ripping job at Harper Brook. **ALLAN KNAPP** for on site visit and scheduling of Lloyd Reserve hazard reduction work. **BETHAN LLOYD** for on site visit and consultation on Lloyd Reserve and preparation of funding application. **TED GODWIN** for agreement to fence and re-veg Harper Brook section on his land. **WHEATBELT NRM** for funding TFOR attendance at the River Symposium. **PETER WEATHERLY** of Avon Valley Environment Society for advice, support and inspiration. Provision of engineering plans, approvals, documents and specifications for shelters and signage. **CENTRAL BRIGADE** for the hazard reduction burning of Tamarix wood piles. **VERNICE Pty Ltd** for the donation of two chainsaws and ripping of Harper Brook site. **RIC and REBECCA LOWE** for generous donation. **ROBYN TAYLOR** for being a “Super Secretary” and for working tirelessly to pull a rabbit out of the hat at the 11th hour. **GAVEN DONEGAN** our ‘river historian’, ‘fire prevention expert’ and a wizard at negotiation with Vernice in organizing the ripping of the Harper Brook re-veg area. **DAVE STREET** for operator and chainsaw, Lloyd Reserve campaign. **BRIAN SHEPHERD** for initiating the Project Concept Sub-Committee . **SARAH DUDLEY** for putting her hand up to join the committee and for donating weed spray equipment. **DESRAE CLARKE** for publications and dedication to Vice- President Duties. **WAYNE CLARKE** for funding applications and keeping tabs on the all important purse strings. **THE FIRST LADY** who until recently kept her TFOR involvement

to a minimum has now become a power house of ideas and support. **THE COMMITTEE** for their time, effort and all the other ways they contribute. Having known the committee members for a long time it is hard to put those friendships to one side when getting down to TFOR business. I therefore appreciate their tolerance, patience and understanding.

COMING UP: As this goes to print we have no fewer than five funding applications either submitted or being prepared and we await Shire approvals for Millard's Pool work. We have just had the inaugural meeting of the Project Concept Sub-Committee which will really start to link our ideas into a quality, visible and environmentally engaging project. Our bread and butter work along the river will continue such as Tamarix control. Our working bee/meetings will now include a morning tea break with seating provided. Over the next 2 or 3 months or so we will see the arrival of the new sign for Duidgee Park, hazard reduction and an entrance/ gateway for Lloyd Reserve. Community tree planting at Harper's Brook in June and responses for project funding and approvals. **RAIN!?!? River Section reports due in April.**

THE TITLE: Having worked with Camels for many years I have heard all the jokes and comments about these maligned creatures. One sticks in my mind... "the camel is a horse designed by a committee". Initially, it seems like a negative comment about not only camels but committees! But to me it is a demonstration of how a committee can achieve the perfect result. The camel beats the horse hands down when it comes to endurance, patience and strength. It is superbly adapted to its environment. A hump for energy reserve, red-blood cells that absorb water, long eye-lashes and closable nostrils to keep out the dust, broad, soft feet to walk across sand and of course its ability to go without drinking is legendary. I believe our committee can also create a "camel" for our river...adapted and enduring.

LATEST NEWS: I have just returned from a week in Dorrigo Nth NSW which is a centre for National Park management and a show piece for walk trails and environmental interpretation. I got a lot of inspiration and ideas from my visit to this magnificent World Heritage Area of rainforests and waterfalls. While I was away damage occurred to Harper Brook fence and Phillips Brook/Toodyay Brook Rivercare projects due to the flash flooding event. I represented TFOR at the Talbot Land Management Group meeting on the 27th to plan their 30,000 seedling planting days for July.

We wish safe travels for Gaven and Christine for their trip to the East. Enjoy this issue of "Biddip" as I know you will. Thank you to the producers, printers and contributors. Our thoughts and prayers are with Wayne and Sarah who are both scheduled for surgery in April (motorbike accidents notwithstanding). We look forward to having them back on deck ASAP.

Greg (TFOR Pres)



Wonga Walk Trail, Dorrigo National Park, NSW

Rats in the creek

Asst. Prof. Peter Speldewinde - University of Western Australia's Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management

Mention the word RAT and it summons up images of a 1950's cartoon with a housewife standing on a chair with a broom screaming and trying to whack a rat or mouse running around the table. Well it may surprise you to know that the common old rat and the house mouse are in the minority and are a late arrival to Australia. Before these pests arrived Australia has a thriving rodent fauna ranging from the tiny Pebble Mound Mouse through to the water rat. These are not marsupials but dinky die 100% Australian rodents which are found nowhere else in the world. Australia is thought of as the land of marsupials but we have about 50 species of native rodent. And, the one which is of particular interest to me is the Australian water rat.

The Australian water rat (or *Rakali*), is a native rodent that lives a semi-aquatic lifestyle. The water rat is ideally suited for living around rivers and streams, it has waterproof fur and hind feet which are partially webbed. Water rats are about the size of a medium sized bandicoot, with small ears, long whiskers and a tail approximately the same length of its body. In Western Australia they are usually black with a white tipped tail. Specimens in the eastern states can be black to grey on their backs while their bellies can be white to orange - hence the scientific name *Hydromys chrysogaster* which very roughly translates as water (hydo) mouse (mys) orange (chryso) belly (gaster). It's worth noting that although they have a waterproof fur, water rats' fur is a very poor insulator so they will leave the water to try and warm up. As they are not completely nocturnal this is a great opportunity to see them when they come out to sun themselves on a rock. While sightings of water rats are uncommon it is possible to see traces of them along rivers and creeks. They tend to bring their prey back onto dry land to feed and subsequently they will form feeding middens where old carapaces and shells from previous meals can be seen. Water rats also have very distinctive hind feet and the partial webbing can sometimes be seen in tracks left in the mud.

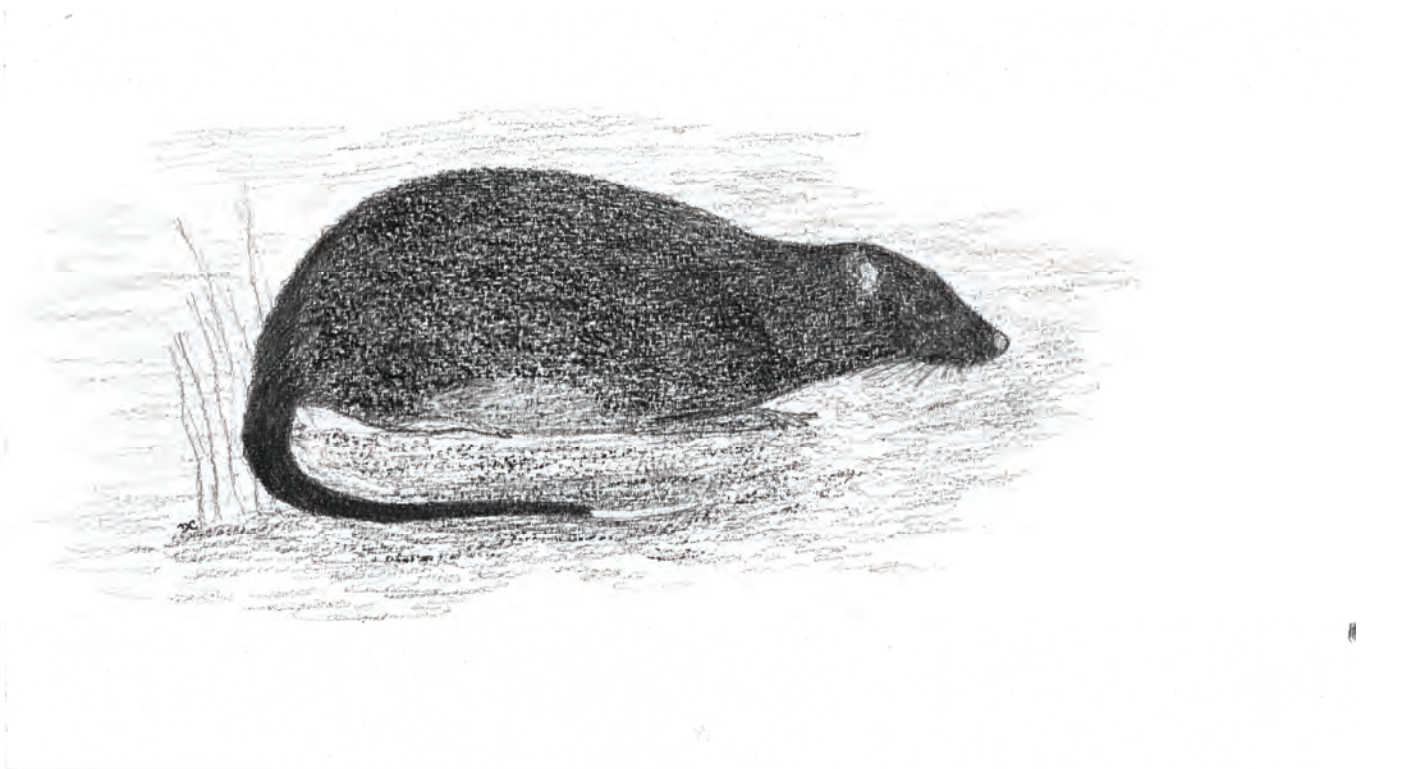
Water rats live in suitable areas across Australia and occurs on many offshore islands. Although the species lives mainly in creeks and wetlands it is also commonly found on beaches where it forages along the strand line. Water rats are opportunistic predators and will a wide range of prey, including marco invertebrates (critters like yabbies and mussels), fish, frogs and even bird nestlings. Because they are foraging along the bottom of creeks where visibility is poor, they have large sensitive whiskers to assist in locating prey, they also have very dexterous front paws for handling food. Their teeth are extremely sharp and their jaws are strong (as a few biologists have found out when their fingers have got in the wrong spot), this enables them to crack the shells of yabbies and other invertebrates.

In Western Australia water rats are an understudied species although this is changing. In the past two years two short term studies have been undertaken in Perth and Albany looking at the impacts of water quality on the species and also habitat requirements.

Rats in the creek ... cont

These studies basically found that water rats are more abundant in areas with nice thick riparian zones (the vegetation along rivers and creeks). This is probably due to predator avoidance. Feral predators, such as foxes and cats, are thought to be a major threat to water rats. Habitat destruction is also a concern. The removal or degradation of the riparian zones not only exposes the rats to predation, it also can also have impacts in the stream such as reducing the amount of stream fauna that the rats rely on for food.

Water rats do have a bit of a bad reputation in some circles. They have been known to raid marron farms which can make them a little unpopular with marron farmers. But, on the whole these critters do no one any harm and can possibly tell you how healthy for creek is. These animals are the top of the food chain in aquatic systems, they are the ones who are eating everyone else. So if they are thriving then the rest of the system is probably thriving. So next time you are wandering along a creek and see a rat, rather than run home to get a chair and a broom, stop and take a closer look you may be looking at an animal which is only found in our part of the world.



Above: Photographs are hard to come by, so Desraé sketched this little fellow.

It is interesting to note that the Department of Water's River "Recovery Action Teams" have the water rat as their mascot.

Lloyd Reserve - the beginning

by Wayne Clarke

On October 1999, Gaven Donegan and Wayne Clarke made an approach to Mr Oriel Lloyd of 'Calbaline Farm', Toodyay, regarding a portion of the historical Avon Location V being donated to the Toodyay Friends of the River. Mr Lloyd viewed the area as being a financial burden, and was only too willing to pass over this encumbrance.

In the presence of his wife, Faith, and son, Dennis, Mr Lloyd bequeathed an area of approximately 5.62 hectares to the *People of Western Australia*. Mr Lloyd wished it to be called *Lloyd Reserve* in memory of his family, and be managed by the Toodyay Friends of the River.

Following considerable negotiation with the Water and Rivers Commission and the Department of Land Administration, the reserve was finally transferred in June 2002. A formal agreement was signed on 27 June 2003 between the Water and Rivers Commission and the Toodyay Friends of the River to manage Lloyd Reserve (R46827 Toodyay). In anticipation of this agreement, an Envirofund application had been submitted in May 2002 to establish a seed orchard in the reserve, along with restoration of the remnant native grasses. The application was successful.

On the 29 May 2003, the Western Australian Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Judy Edwards MLA, officially accepted the reserve on behalf of the people of Western Australia. In this one hundred and seventy-fifth year of the settlement of Toodyay, it is timely to give some history of the location.

The Anderson brothers, Alex and Thomas, originally took up their grant Avon Location V, sometime after 1832 and named it 'Nardie'. However, when they found it included a great stony hill [probably Mt Nardie], they were given permission to relocate. James Lloyd, proprietor of The Star and Garter at Fremantle, took up the Nardie grant sometime after 1836. The titles took a number of years to come through, as they are dated 13 October 1840.¹

Shortly after the Lloyd's returned to England, and Charles Harper leased the property.² Harper's long-term lease expired in the 1860's. At that time, James and three of his children died in England, and his widow returned to the colony and her sons, Charles and Joseph. The property was divided between them, Charles naming his portion 'Calbaline'.³

A number of years ago the property changed hands - just short of one hundred and seventy-five years of continual ownership. However, with Mr Oriel Lloyd's legacy, there will be an on-going reminder of the Lloyd Family's ownership, and of their contribution to Western Australia's history.

¹ 'Old Toodyay and Newcastle' by Rica Erickson, published by Toodyay Shire Council, 1974, pp 10

² *ibid*, p 33

³ *ibid*, p176

Lloyd Reserve - the beginning cont...



Above:

Official opening Lloyd Reserve, 29th May 2003, by the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Dr Judy Edwards MLA, and at the same time launched the River Recovery Plans for Sections 1 and 2, 4 and 5.

Photo Wayne Clarke



Above: Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Dr Judy Edwards MLA with (l to r):

Wayne Clarke (bending), Messer's Murray, Dennis and Oriol Lloyd. Mr Lloyd and his son, Dennis, donated Lloyd Reserve to the People of Western Australia in memory of their Family.

Photo Desraé Clarke

MILLARD'S POOL

'the largest on the Avon' and 'the finest in the State'

Robyn Taylor based on research by Beth Frayne

After our February working bee fencing a section of Harper's Brook, the Friends crossed the Toodyay-Northam Road to have a look at Millard's Pool. This lovely stretch of water on the Avon River flows past the Glencoe Estate. A walking/cycle path runs along this section, though we doubt many people use it. Apart from the pathway there are no amenities to entice people to stay and enjoy the river and the few remaining pools of permanent water - Millard's Pool, and further downstream, the picturesque Red Bank Pool (near Lloyd's Reserve which is managed by TFOR). At Millard's Pool, which is maintained with water due to the construction of Extracts Weir, the Friends are planning to erect a picnic shelter with interpretation signage as our gift to Toodyay to celebrate its 175th birthday. A future plan is to erect a bird-hide near Red Bank Pool, and hopefully one day at Millard's Pool there will be a launching site for small boats and canoes.

Apart from the annual Avon Descent, Millard's Pool and its surrounds haven't always been so little utilised as they are today. In times gone by it was a very popular venue for picnics and water sports, and the home of the Toodyay Amateur Swimming Club.

The following account of Millard's Pool will deal with its history as a place for recreation. In the next issue of *Biddip*, we will cover other aspects of the pool's story: its floods; a plan in the 1930s to 'train' the river; a proposed weir; issues to do with ownership and cattle; and experiments with the 'acclimatisation' of various species of fish not native to the Avon.

Millard's Pool (part of Avon Location V) was originally known as Nardie Pool. Apparently in the Nyungar language Nardie meant 'river bank'.¹ Later, possibly around the turn of the 20th century, the pool was named after Thomas Millard an early landowner in the area. The Anglican Nardie Cemetery, at the southern end of the pathway was gazetted in 1857 on land acquired from Millard.²

Moving forward to 1906. Millard's Pool was reported in the press to be the venue for a large picnic and 'aquatic sports' area as part of the town's first Newcastle Week carnival. This was to be a major event held in October as part of the Agricultural Show. VIPs who had accepted invitations to attend the carnival included the Lieutenant Governor Sir Edward Stone, and the Federal Treasurer Sir John Forrest. According to one article, in which tenders were being invited from bakers and others to cater for the event, approximately 300 children would be attending. For the general public there would be lunch supplied at 1 shilling per head, and afternoon tea for sixpence.³ Over the following decades Millard's Pool would continue to be popular with the folks of Toodyay.

In December 1929 and February 1930, the 50th Troop Boy Scouts under Scoutmaster C. Burnett, enjoyed picnics at Millard's Pool with a programme of swimming races.⁴

On 27 January 1931 a public meeting was held at which The Toodyay Amateur Swimming Club was formed. The Club and assembled guests met at the pool [at Nardie], which was officially opened on 15 February 1931 by the Chairman of the Road Board, Mr E. G. Hasson. The Road Board promised to help with providing facilities for the bathers. 'The pool is two and a half miles long and 30 feet deep. A spring board and high diving stand have been erected, and provision has been made for non-swimmers.'⁵ A swimming carnival was held at the opening and the names of the winners would be familiar to many.

The results of the carnival were:— Ladies' Race (open): Sylvia Lloyd, 1; Mavis Wroth, 2. Gents Race (open): H. Kingston, 1; T. Dorizzi, 2. Boys (under 7): T Dorizzi, 1; Jack Hasson, 2. Boys (under 14): D. Smith, 1; P. Deboni, 2 ; Neat dive: W. Ellery. High dive: R. L. Jack.⁶

The Club's swimming season started in November, though this doesn't appear to be consistent. An announcement in November 1931 in the *West Australian* indicated there had been a large gathering at Millard's Pool for the Swimming Club's season. Once again, it was officially opened by the Chairman of the Road Board.⁷ In 1933, the official opening took place on New Year's Day. A description in the *West*

Millard's Pool ... cont

Australian described the pool being 'situated about three miles from the town in a setting of natural beauty, surrounded by hills. Diving facilities and dressing sheds have been provided by the local swimming club.'⁸ Two new springboards had been installed.⁹ The Toodyay Amateur Swimming Club would continue for about 5 years.

For those who didn't like getting their feet and petticoats wet, Millard's and other Pools along the Avon were popular for boating parties. There are delightful photographs showing ladies in their summer finery and their male companions enjoying the delights of the river. Perhaps a fishing line or two was dropped over the side – but that's another story.



Above: The Extracts Factory water supply on a misty morning, Millard's Pool, c. 1960 *Photo courtesy Derek Donegan*

¹ *Western Mail*, 11 November 1926, p.6.

² Erickson, R., *Old Toodyay and Newcastle*, Toodyay Shire Council, 1974, p.135.

³ *The West Australian*, 22 Sept 1906, p.11; 2 October 1906, p.5.

⁴ *The West Australian*, 14 January 1930, p.7; 7 Mach 1930, p.8.

⁵ *The West Australian*, 21 February 1931, p.7.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ *West Australian*, 17 November 1931, p.13.

⁸ *West Australian*, 18 January 1933, p.12.

⁹ *Toodyay Herald*, 6 January 1933, p.1.

TFOR Volunteers Song

New lyrics by Bob Frayne, 2010

Sung to the tune of The Gendarmes' Duet. "The music was composed in 1868 by Jacques Offenbach for his opera bouffe Genevieve de Brabant (the three-act version). A comic duet for bass and baritone, to French audiences it is known as 'Couplets des Deux Hommes d'Armes'; to the British it is 'The Gendarmes' Duet'." English Words by M. Barnett.

First performed by Bob and Beth Frayne on 21 Nov. 2010, at the TFOR Christamas BBQ at the Fraynes' home, 12 Drummond Street, Toodyay.

The first verse is one of the original Offenbach verses, followed by the two new verses. These three verses were performed as such at the premiere.

We're public guardians bold yet wary
Of ourselves we take great care.
To risk our precious lives we're
chary
When danger looms we're never
there.
But when we meet a helpless woman
Or little boys who do no harm.

We run them in (we run them in)
We run them in (we run them in)
We show them we're the bold gen-
darmes.
We run them in (we run them in)
We run them in (we run them in)
We show them we're the bold gen-
darmes.

We are workers worn and weary
For our river's health we strive.
Tamarix and Bridal Creeper
Are not allowed to stay alive.
But when it comes to planting na-
tives
The ones that really do belong.

We're on the job (we're on the job)
We're on the job (we're on the job)
We show them we're the volunteers.
We're on the job (we're on the job)
We're on the job (we're on the job)
We show them we're the volunteers.

This year we had a very dry Descent
And poor old Greg had to give in.
All our pools are filed with sediment
And we have nowhere to swim.
But Burlong Pool is now alright
again
And lots of picnic shelters built.

We're on the job (we're on the job)
We're on the job (we're on the job)
We show them we're the volunteers.

We're on the job (we're on the job)
We're on the job (we're on the job)
We show them we're the volunteers

TFOR Volunteers Song ... continued



Above: Gendarmes Duet at Bob and Beth Frayne's, November 2010

Left: President Greg 's presentation at the same venue.



Newsletter of the
Toodyay Friends of the River

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*“Make Friends with
our Avon River”*



Toodyay Friends of the River

The objects of the *Toodyay Friends of the River* are to *work towards the conservation and rehabilitation of the Avon River and its environs. In the bigger picture of natural resource management, we are committed to implementing the Avon River Management Program and its associated River Recovery Plans for each of the four sections of river that pass through Toodyay.*

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The Back Page

OUR SPONSORS



Members enjoying a chat at the Christmas Breakfast, Frayne Park.

21st November 2010

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