

Woosehill Church Magazine

Sharing God's love with the community

July - August 2021



**Find us on our website
woosehillchurch.org
and on our Facebook page
Or follow our livestreamed services on
YouTube**



Dear Church Family and all other readers,

I started this issue of the church magazine, thinking that I had very little material to put in, but my goodness I was wrong - after a 20 page issue last time, we are back up to 24!

I am really struck by just how much is going on in our church and parish as we begin to move forward in our opening up, whilst still exercising a good deal of caution to ensure all feel comfortable and safe within our church environment.

Looking back to the start of the year when our church seemed to have lost its energy and enthusiasm, we have moved on a good deal and this is just cause for thanks and praise.

Do have a good read and see what is on offer; special services, social groups and plenty of volunteering opportunities.

Let us pray for success in all our ventures, giving thanks for how far we have come and looking forward in faith to what lies ahead.

With every blessing,
Val

Next deadline: 19 September 2021
Articles as usual preferably by e-mail to:
valerie.weedon@btinternet.com

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Church Services after 19th July

From 19th July most Covid guidance and legal restrictions have been lifted, including restrictions on communal worship. The emphasis is now on individuals, companies, and organisations to decide what precautions are appropriate.

At the July Church Council meeting it was agreed that for the rest of July & August we would take a cautious approach and continue with most of the precautions currently in place for services at Woosehill Church. A further review will be taken for September onwards. It is worth remembering that other users of the Church building may take a different approach.

The main change is everyone will be allowed to sing, albeit wearing a mask if not part of the choir. Coffee will continue to be normally served outside, but if raining it will be served inside. Also, whilst the chairs will still be set out at 2m, people, if they wish, can move chairs together.

There was a need to balance the desire to return to a normal service against the concerns of most people about removing too many of the Covid precautions too quickly. The precautions will be regularly reviewed to determine whether they are still required & beneficial and whether they comply with guidance from the Government and our parent Churches.

Below is a table comparing the previous & new Covid precautions for services at Woosehill Church.

Current	July/August
Windows & doors opened	Windows & doors opened
Use of sanitiser	Use of sanitiser
Social distancing, 2m apart at all times	Chairs set to 2m, but can be moved closer
Masks worn indoors at all times	Masks worn indoors at all times
No congregational singing	Congregational singing allowed (with masks)
No passed collection	No passed collection
No physical sharing of the peace	No physical sharing of the peace
Individual cups for communion	Individual cups for communion
No chatting inside	No chatting inside unless wet outside
If dry: coffee served outside; everyone seated If wet: no coffee	If dry: coffee served outside; everyone seated If wet: coffee served inside; everyone seated

If you have any concerns, questions, or suggestions about these changes to our Covid precautions then please contact the Stewards or Ministers.

Steve



Technology Team

The pandemic has made the church increasingly reliant on taking services to the people, as well as the people coming directly to services. Whilst during lockdown attendance was almost 100% over the web, the numbers attending remotely are still between 30 and 50%. The pandemic has made the ability to use technology to take the church into people's homes essential and not a 'nice to have.'

Peter Wells and his team at Saint Paul's demonstrated what was possible early in lockdown and last summer the church at Woosehill tooled up, under the guidance of Roger Prior, Craig Brown and Bob Clark, to deliver the livestreaming service that you enjoy today. Whilst we were able to deliver a satisfactory service through the summer, the technical team was depleted during the summer when Tony Sayer died and Roger Prior decided to focus on Rose Street. This left a team of two to run the sound system, which is not sustainable in the long term.

This team continued to work through the winter, but the severity of the lockdown and the process of gaining familiarity with the use of the new equipment precluded training new personnel. This has now changed and has offered us at least a window (let us hope more than that) to recruit and more importantly train new personnel, which we would like to do over the coming few weeks. If you are able to help or interested; please contact Bob Clark or Ed Smith.

We've written a comprehensive instruction booklet on how the technology is used and would see the training programme as being a combination of formal instruction and learning through experience. This would involve hands-on teaching outside of a service, observation of what goes on during a service, taking partial responsibility for a service, supervised responsibility for a service; all before being asked to fly solo. We want to provide a supportive and mistake tolerant learning experience. Being a member of the technical team is both rewarding and fun, so please volunteer to join us.

Bob Clark and Ed Smith

REFLECTION FROM OUR MINISTER

Dear Friends,

I am aware some of you have noticed the different ways of communion being served in our church and wondering why it is so.

The practice and liturgy for communion vary from denomination to denomination; within the same denomination, they vary from congregation to congregation. There are a number of factors contributing to these varying patterns in celebrating and serving communion; theology, tradition, doctrines and particular beliefs are some of them.

In some traditions, the celebrant and helpers receive the elements first. Then they would be better prepared to serve others. In some traditions, it is quite the opposite - serving people first and at the end, the presiding minister and helpers share the elements. In some traditions, the elements are taken to the congregation to their seats. Then bread and wine are consumed in turn, together.

In whatever way communion is celebrated and served, each tradition has so much significance and richness in their own practices. They enhance and enrich our understanding of the sacrament of The Lord's Supper. The symbolisms contained within the celebration of Holy Communion are strongly connected with early church traditions and Biblical precedence. In some traditions, the practices are followed quite strictly; in some, the priests have the discretion to follow a pattern that they are most inclined towards.

The priest and the helpers receiving the elements first symbolises the biblical image of the host and the guests; receiving them in the end symbolises servanthood: serving the guests first and consuming in the end; everyone receiving together signifies togetherness at the Lord's table.

The patterns and practices may vary but, in the Protestant Church, our beliefs are held together in the understanding that the sacrament of the Lord's supper is a visible sign of an invisible grace and that as followers of Christ this is for us, essentially an act of remembrance of his life, death and resurrection.

With every blessing,

Soba





Afternoon Tea at Woosehill Church



Saturday 21st August 2021
3pm-5pm
Free event

Please speak to Amanda to book your tea or email her on parkie@ntlworld.com by

1st August 2021

Including any special dietary requirements.

Group 1: “Regathering the Congregation” led by Steve Lewis

Group 1’s task was to actively reconnect together all those in the Woosehill Church family. Ensuring that everyone knows what is happening as we return to worship together and feels part of that journey.



It was decided early on that the best way of communicating with everyone would be to visit them to catchup with them and deliver a goody bag. During May and June, we agreed the content of the goody bags, gathered the various items together, printed notes and assembled the bags ready for delivery.

A key item in the goody bag was a sunflower plant for the sunflower growing competition. In early June (whilst I was away) the rest of the group started mass sunflower plant production. Two things quickly became clear, no-one had green fingers and slugs love young sunflower plants! After sowing a second batch we just managed to grow enough!

The moving of the lifting of the final lockdown restrictions from 21st June to 19th July was both a blessing and a curse. We had more time to assemble the bags and deliver them, but we had to keep the sunflower plants alive for longer. By early July everything was ready and with some trepidation we started delivering the bags on Saturday 3rd July.

Before we started, we had thought we would visit 4 to 6 homes per hour, a few minutes explaining why the visit, a quick chat, hand the bag over and then off to the next house. How wrong we were - more like 30 to 45 minutes for each visit and in some cases if Alison hadn’t texted me saying dinner was ready, I think I might have been there all evening! Not that it was a problem, it was fantastic, very enjoyable, and fully justified our decision to visit people, it was just unexpected!

Often the conversations were about Covid, Church services, Soba, but we also talked about the weather, work, the children, football (inevitably), holidays, computers, decorating, asbestos, gardening and so on. The most surprising thing was the reaction to the sunflower plant - for a few it was trepidation, “I can’t grow anything”, but mostly it was excitement and a determination to win – I didn’t realise



Woosehill Church members were so competitive!

In just over a week we visited and delivered bags to 48 households. If we've missed someone it was unintentional, please get in contact as we have a few spares (except sunflower plants). In addition, we gave bags to Soba, Richard, Catherine, Cara and Elaine so they would know what we've been doing, what was in the bag and most importantly they wouldn't sulk because they didn't have a sunflower plant for the growing competition

Was visiting everyone worthwhile? Yes, undoubtedly, we had some great feedback during the visits, people thanked us for calling and messages afterwards thanking us for the goody bag. It has also helped us understand what would need to change (or not) for people to return to worshipping in Church. For me personally it was very enjoyable (and as a Steward it was very worthwhile), for some people I probably talked with them for longer than I have ever done before and have got to know them (and they me) a bit better. It has shown that there is a Woosehill Church family, but it needs nurturing to grow and flourish and we need to think how to do that. If you have any ideas, or better still want to be actively involved please contact us.

Finally I'd like to thank the group members, Amy, Jeanette and Geoff for their efforts, not only visiting, delivering bags and growing sunflower plants, but, in many ways more importantly, their input into the content of the bag, questioning and refining the purpose and message of what was in the bag. Guys, I couldn't have done it without you. I'd also like to thank everyone we visited, without your friendly welcome and willingness to engage the visits would not have been the success they were.

Steve

A Prayer

Heavenly Father, please reveal yourself to us as we dwell in your Word. Give us eyes to see where you are at work in our community so that we can talk to each other about what we think that you are doing and what we feel you are asking of us. Give us wisdom to discern how our ideas line up with Scripture, how they fit with our gifts as a church and how they meet the needs of our neighbourhood. Show us how and where we can practice hospitality, a listening ear and an ability to put others at ease. Please direct where we focus our effort and energy. In all we do, Lord, keep our eyes on you, our aim to please you, and our motive to glorify you. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

Amen

What on Earth is Heaven Like?

My friend and I went walking through spring woods,
where early bluebells caught the blue of sky
through light green leaves.

We found our favourite place –
an old log seat, our backs against the trunks
of beech and alder.

We talked of this, and that,
shared news of friends and family, when suddenly
she said: 'What's heaven really like?'

Old memories of Sunday School came flooding in:
'All singing hymns,' I said, 'and playing harps
while sitting on a cloud.'

'Sitting on a cloud?' she said,
'I shan't like that, too damp around the bot!' We laughed
and laughed, and then she said: 'I'll tell you –
when I get there!' And we went back to my place
for tea and cake.

But as spring melted into summer,
my friend grew pale and ill, until at summer's end
she died.

And so I walked alone
through autumn woods, the leaves
in shades of gold
and brown and drifting on the wind.

I sat
in our old place, leaning against a beech.
And in my head I heard her laughter.

'It's fun out here,' she said.

'No hymns, no harps and not a cloud in sight.
But there's music, and meetings with old friends
and loved ones, sharing memories and stories.
There's joy, and hope, and oh! Such beauty!
And overall – a sense of wonder.

What's heaven like? Like all
the best bits of earth you've ever known.
I'll show you, when you get here.'

Rosi MorganBarry





Monday Home Group The Book of Job

The Monday Home Group decided, at my request, to read and analyse the Book of Job. Why Job? Well basically I knew the story and was intrigued by the phrase *Jobs' comforters*. As Ed Smith mentioned it was a bit repetitive in sections and indeed at times it was hard going, all 42 chapters of it, which we covered at about 3 chapters each week. Soba mentioned that repetition was a good learning tool. Geoff took prayers, for which we could add subjects which we wanted, at the end of each session.



Job was *a perfect and upright man* (1:8) and the Book describes the long and difficult trial he experienced.

So what were some of the things I learnt from the Book of Job?

Comfort those who suffer

Job was in a very dark place at the height of his trials. Rather than comforting him, his friends insisted he must have sinned which had caused his suffering. This led Job to call them *miserable comforters* (16:2). He didn't need correcting, he needed comforting. He needed a kind word or just being there for him and saying nothing.

All people suffer

It does not matter whether you are good or bad, you cannot judge a person spiritually as to how much they suffer.

Tests

Life's tests can last for a minute or, in some cases, a lifetime. Tests are part of a person's spiritual growth and part of your personal development. We may not know why we are tested so it is the way we respond that is significant. We must draw nearer to God so that he can be a comforter. Suffering can be really intense. However much the pain and suffering, God is still there. For the righteous God will reward abundantly (the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before, Job 42:10).

God has enormous dominion over the natural world

Although there was some disagreement in the group as to what the modern name of some the animals listed were, there is no mistaking the power of God over the natural world. If you are a quiz addict you will find the answer as to whether a horse can run faster than an ostrich in Job (the answer is no, the ostrich can run faster). God has given talents to various creatures.

Job was before his time

Steve mentioned that Job was before his time: *And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.* (Job 42:15). No sexual discrimination then!

Conclusion

To get to spiritual maturity you have to experience adversity, *In this world ye shall have tribulation but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world*, Jesus said (John 16:33).

God bless,

Michael Taylor

Church Charity for Next Year



Each year we give a tenth of our donated income to a selection of charities chosen by the Tithing Committee. The church always has a main charity which we support financially and with prayer. We have supported our current charity Embrace the Middle East for over 3 years, so it is now time to choose a new charity. The tithing committee will be meeting over the summer and they will decide who we support going forward. They welcome any ideas as to which Christian charity we support next. This can be a local charity, a national charity, or an overseas charity.

Please let Soba, Doreen or Lynne Paine know if you have any suggestions

Thank you.



The Great Mouse Hunt



When we planned our end of term family picnic and Mouse Hunt we were only concerned that it might rain. As the week went on it became apparent that it was going to be VERY HOT! 🥵

Thankfully establishing that Sue and Dave Youle had a great gazebo, we were all set to go - and then Ruth was pinged 😞

Quick regroup, we can manage with the lovely Jeannie on refreshments. Perhaps coffee and tea won't be so popular - get some cold drinks too. The event was advertised only through our private Tadpoles Facebook page so that we wouldn't go over numbers.

The day dawned - yes it was hot, but oh what lovely shade we had from the tree. This grassy patch at the side of the church has been a blessed oasis during lockdowns and we were really thankful of it today.

We set up, hanging our mice (thank you knitters!) from bushes, trees, gazebo, using the car park and green spaces and were ready for start at midday when our first family arrived on bikes with an amazing baby carrier attached. Lots of time to chat - baby was too small to hunt mice - and then other families arrived and Amy turned up to help as always. After picnics were enjoyed, the hunting started in earnest with excited cries and calls for help: 'I can't find Whiskers!'

As the families left, the children were all given a small mouse as a memento. This was an afternoon of innocent enjoyment with a lovely atmosphere. We all enjoyed it and have kept the mice used in the hunt so we can repeat the activity, indoors or out.

Thanks to all who assisted in any way to bring about this joyous occasion.

Val



Fun in the sun at the Mouse Hunt



Seaside fun at the last Tadpoles session of the term





Elaine

Wasn't it just great to have Elaine preaching with us again? We look forward to her being with us again to enhance our worship and renew friendships.

I was fortunate thanks to our brilliant tech team to watch online from Keswick, not quite the same as being there, but pretty good all the same.

Thanks to Richard for being my official photographer on the day!

It is SO good to have her back with us.





Ride and Stride 2021

What are you doing on Saturday September 11th? How about visiting local churches and raising some funds while you do so?

The national Ride & Stride event happens every year and this time we want Berkshire to climb up the league table of successful fundraising counties. Any mode of transport is fine – you could walk, cycle, ride - simply choose a route and find sponsorship from friends and family.

You can go by yourself or in a group, any time between 10am and 6pm and many people make a day of it. We are very fortunate to have so many wonderful and interesting churches to visit, and this year we hope many will be open and offering refreshments – there's nothing like a bit of cake to fuel our endeavours.

Your nominated church will benefit directly as they will receive half of your sponsorship. The remaining 50% goes to Berkshire Historic Churches Trust which in turn makes generous grants to churches in need.

More details will be provided closer to the event by your local co-ordinator. Please keep the date free in your diary!

Prue Matchwick
BHCT Ride & Stride Co-ordinator





Reimagining Worship at Woosehill - group 3

This statement which has come out of our group discussions so far was put together by Richard as moderator of the group. We seek to fulfil that vision over the coming months and beyond. Although the group's initial remit has been achieved on paper, we meet again in September to review progress against the aims set. It has been suggested that we might hang this on the wall in church - what do you think?

Worship is always about bringing the best of ourselves and offering it to God, the one who is worthy of all that we are, mind body and spirit.

We bring our history and our present world.

We bring our private grief and our secret delight.

We bring all that we have been and all that we hope to be in the future.

Worship is where we find the point of lively equilibrium, where variety is embraced as a blessing and an adventure.

We seek encounter with God and with each other.

We are Methodist and Anglican and both and neither.

We enjoy freedom and structure.

We meet God through music which lifts our hearts heavenwards, whatever the style.

Worship reminds us how to be a community, for the community, with the community.

We are inspired and renewed by the Holy Spirit.

We are rooted in traditions which help us to proclaim the good news afresh.

We thirst after the kingdom of God through insights which make sense of our daily lives and through moments of profound encounter with God.

We are welcoming and inclusive because God is love.

Together, we are Woosehill Church.

More than that, in worship we learn how to be God's Church for God's community of Woosehill.



Group 2 - Contacting those on the Edge

Thursday mornings are starting again in September!

See notice sheet or web site for confirmation of details

1st Thursday: Sing something Simple

2nd Thursday: Wool with a Mission

3rd Thursday: Art Group - do your own thing currently, keep an eye on the website for more information

4th Thursday: Sewing/ craft group

New Saturday group: Sip & Share

Have you lost someone or something or are you just lonely?

Then this group is for you - chat over a cuppa, starting with monthly meetings in September at 11am. No need to book, just turn up.



Artwork by Tadpoles



Cara's Ordination



And our very warm wishes to Richard on his appointment as honorary Canon in the Oxford Diocese



--- and of course Bertie had to get in on the act!



***A prayer for this world:***

*O God, we thank thee for this universe, our great home;
for its vastness and its riches,
and for the manifoldness of the life which teems upon it
and of which we are part.*

*We praise thee for the arching sky and the blessed winds,
for the driving clouds and the constellations on high.*

*We praise thee for the salt sea and the running water,
for the everlasting hills, for the trees,
and for the grass under our feet.*

*We thank thee for our senses
by which we can see the splendour of the morning,
and hear the jubilant songs of love,
and smell the breath of the springtime.*

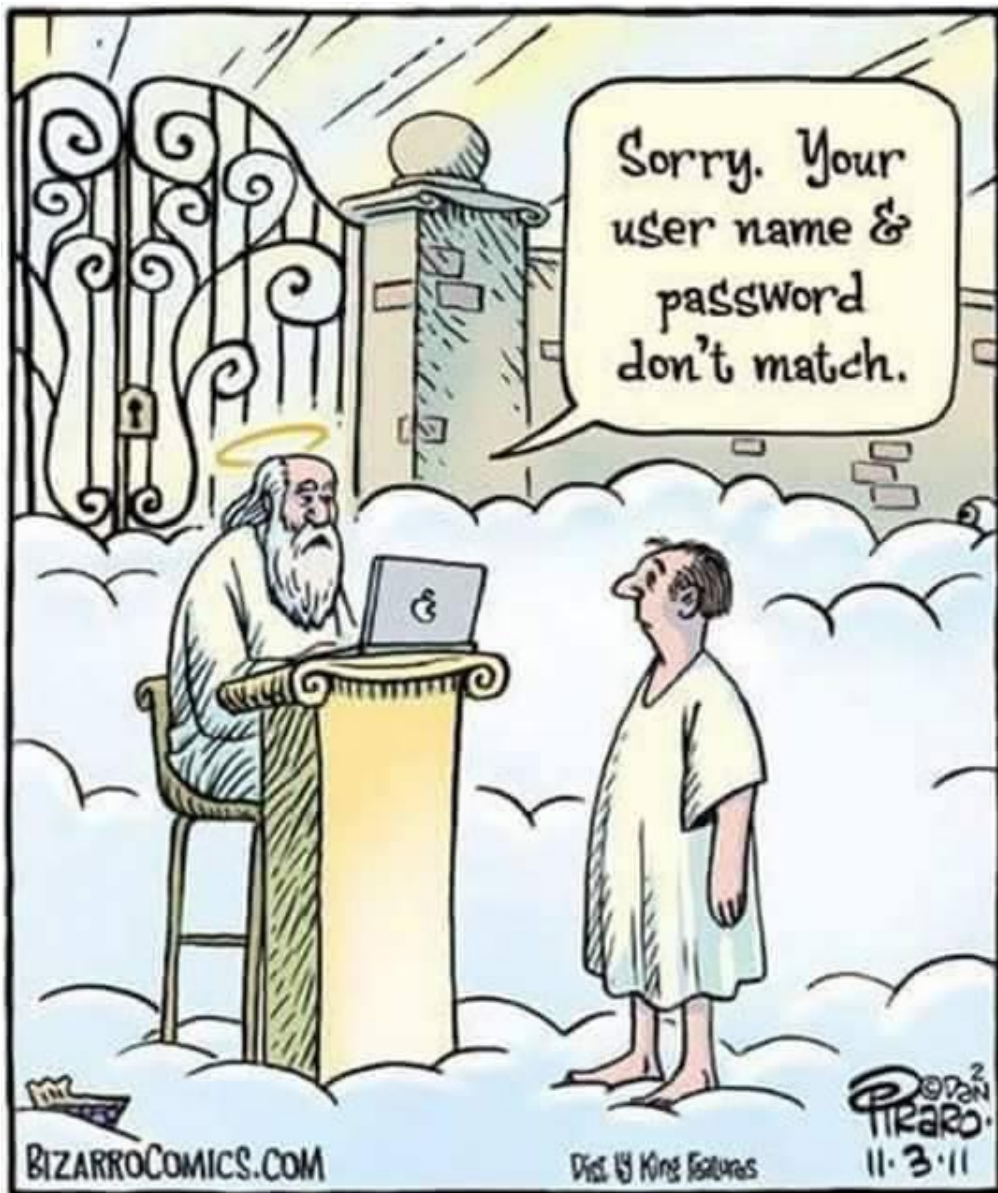
*Grant us, we pray thee,
a heart wide open to all this joy and beauty,
and save our souls from being so steeped in care
or so darkened by passion
that we pass heedless and unseeing
when even the thorn bush by the wayside
is aflame with the glory of God.*

Amen

Walter Rauschenbusch, American theologian and Baptist pastor.



And finally - to make us smile!





Special Services

As well as the normal Sunday services, several special services are planned:

Thanksgiving and Reflective service

On **Sunday 8th August**, the 10am service will be a service of thanksgiving. There will also be a reflective service in the evening at 6.30 to light candles and offer prayers.

At these services, there will be an opportunity to write messages/prayers on cards, to be hung on the Easter cross. If you are unable to be at Church that day then please leave your card at Church and it will be hung for you.

You can write whatever you want, thanking key workers, thanking God, remembering those who have suffered hardship or have died during the pandemic, family gatherings and events which could not happen and those which could. Whether your message is written in thanks, hope, sadness or anger does not matter - if you wish, the card can even be left blank; all will be hung on the cross and all will be offered up to God.

Covenant Service

As we were in lockdown, the Covenant service at the beginning of the year was postponed. The service will now be held on **Sunday 5th September**.

Harvest Festival

This year's Harvest Festival will be held on **Sunday 26th September**



EasyFundraising reminder



EasyFundraising is a way for the Church to gain extra income from your online shopping at no cost to you, and is simple to use. It's safe to use as you still buy from the retailers' own web site with all the usual security and delivery information available. By going to the retailers' web site via EasyFundraising they will record your visit and make a small donation to the Church if you purchase something.

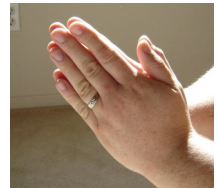
EasyFundraising works on any common computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone. It will look a little different depending on your device and software, but the principles remain the same.

To get started either download and open the **EasyFundraising** App, or use any of the common web browsers and go to

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/woosehillchurch>



Closing Prayers



Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

***Father, help me to live this day to the full,
being true to You, in every way.
Jesus, help me to give myself away to others,
being kind to everyone I meet.
Spirit, help me to love the lost,
proclaiming Christ in all I do and say.
Amen.***



Woosehill Church Services and meetings

As the rules change and more of us are allowed to return to church, we continue to livestream our 10am service on our Woosehill Church YouTube channel, the link also advertised weekly on our Facebook page, newsletter and website woosehillchurch.org

We also at present at the moment on Zoom:

Parish Bible study on Tuesday evenings 7.15 - 8.30pm

Together in Prayer on the third Thursday of the month from 8-9pm
Contact Lyn Brown for details

House group on Monday evenings contact Geoff Peck on 0118 9786711

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