



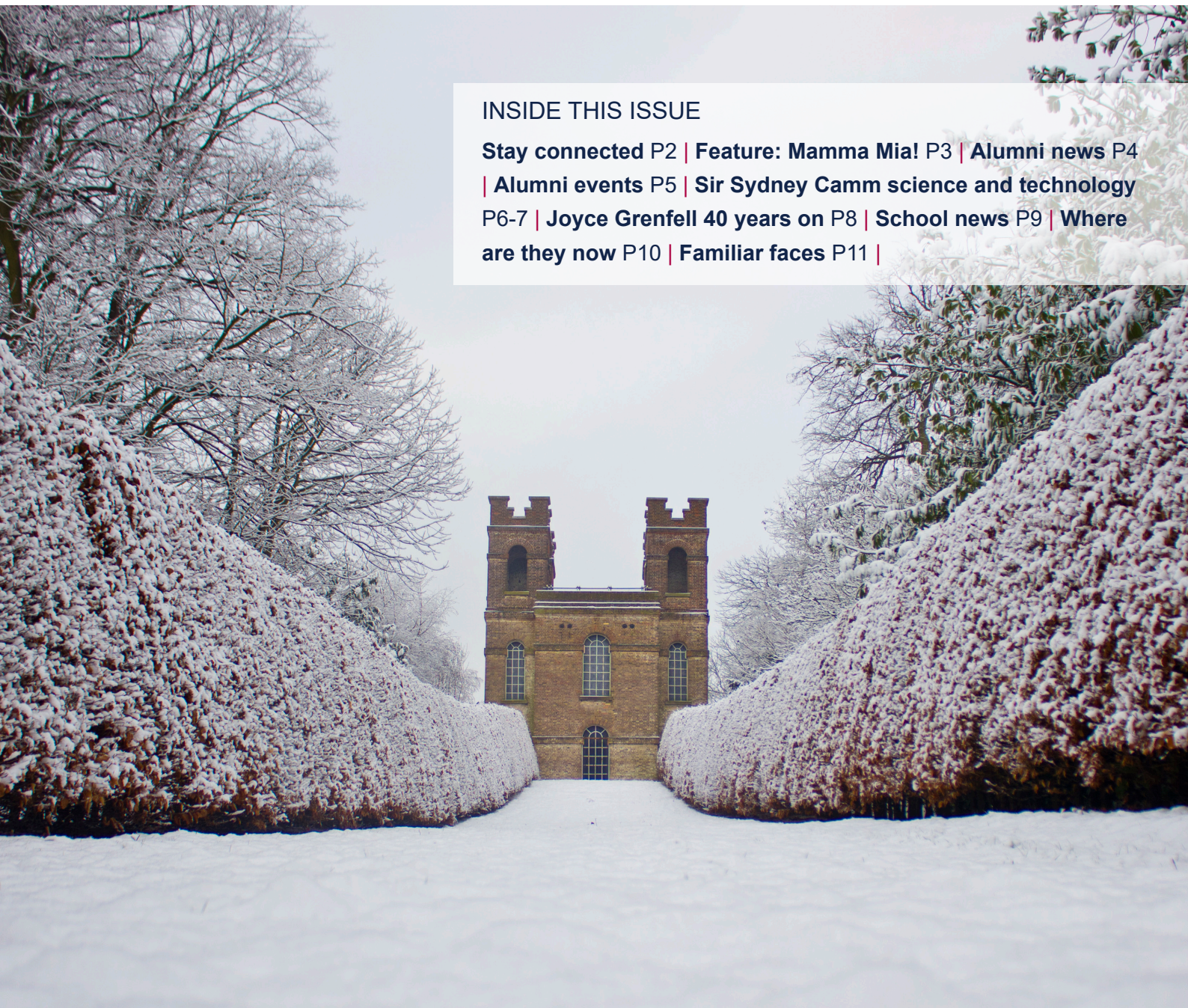
December 2019  
Issue 16

# ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

[www.claremontfancourtalumni.co.uk](http://www.claremontfancourtalumni.co.uk)

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*Wishing you the gifts of the season - Peace, Joy and Hope*  
**Merry Christmas from the alumni team at  
Claremont Fan Court School**



# STAY CONNECTED

## Kelly O'Hara

Alumni relations officer

[alumni@claremont.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:alumni@claremont.surrey.sch.uk)

## Kelly Hilder

Development officer

[development@claremont.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:development@claremont.surrey.sch.uk)



## KEEP IN TOUCH

We're always keen to keep in touch with the Claremont Fan Court community. Whether it's memories of your school days, stories of your travels, career details or reunions.

Please email [alumni@claremont.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:alumni@claremont.surrey.sch.uk) with your updates.

## CAN YOU HELP?

The alumni department at Claremont Fan Court School would like to create a name for our alumni community which will replace "Claremont Fan Court Alumni".

We want a name that embraces the heritage of both our school communities, inclusive of Claremont School and Fan Court School, but also resonates with our current pupils, former pupils, parents, staff and the friends of our community.

We would love to hear from you if you have any suggestions, and we will offer a prize to the person who comes up with a name that we can use which best encapsulates the essence of our community in a word or two.

Suggestions to date include 'The Claremontians' or 'The Fan Courtiers'. Please send your ideas to [alumni@claremontfancourt.sch.uk](mailto:alumni@claremontfancourt.sch.uk)

## Join the online alumni community

- Create an online profile
- Keep your contact details up to date
- Connect with old school friends
- Register to attend alumni events
- Receive school and alumni news

[www.claremontfancourtalumni.co.uk](http://www.claremontfancourtalumni.co.uk)

## A warm welcome to all our alumni

In September school returned with a flourish and I am delighted to say that our science and technology departments have now moved into the new Sir Sydney Camm building. We look forward to formally opening the building during the spring term, but you can take a look at latest pictures of the completed building on pages 6 and 7.

The autumn term is always busy with school events, with a poignant Remembrance service and in the run up to Christmas with carol concerts and nativities. As the term ends we say goodbye to Mrs Sage, who has been our music school administrator for 19 years (page 11). (If you played a musical instrument or attended a singing lesson during your time at Claremont Fan Court, it's likely you have Mrs Sage to thank for booking your lesson and making sure you turned up on time!)

With more events planned for 2020 (see page 5) I do hope you will have an opportunity to attend and revisit Claremont Fan Court or reconnect with old friends.

Enjoy catching up with our news in this latest edition of our alumni newsletter. Wishing you and your family a peaceful and festive season.

### Gordon Hunt

Chair of governors and member of the alumni community



## A word from the editor...

We welcome our newest member to the development team at Claremont Fan Court, Kelly O'Hara.

I am delighted to join in the role of alumni relations officer and I am looking forward to engaging with you all. I will be reaching out to the Claremont Fan Court community through a variety of events, gatherings and reunions to engage with you. Whether you are a staff member, former pupil, current or former parent or friend I would ask you to connect with us and get involved in our community.

### Kelly O'Hara

Alumni relations officer



# ALUMNI FEATURE

## SOPHIE MATTHEW IN THE WEST END

We are delighted that Claremont Fan Court alumni **Sophie Matthew (1999 - 2011)** is starring as Lisa in *Mamma Mia!* at the Novello Theatre. Her previous credits include 'Sarah' in *Our House* (UK Tour), 'Barbara' in *Summer Holiday* (UK Tour) and 'Ginny' in *Humans* (Channel 4).

Sophie's passion for performing began during her teenage years here at Claremont where she took up the arts at A level and began attending dance lessons outside of school. Sophie went on to study at Esher College before full time Musical Theatre (BA Hons) training at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts, which specialises in drama, music and dance.

Sophie remembers Claremont fondly, saying: *"I was lucky enough to have a school that has an amazing drama and music department. This is not as common nowadays and I was glad to go to a school that thrived in this area. I think as a kid it's really exciting to be someone different and be able to learn to express yourself as someone else whilst you figure out who you are."*

We are pleased that Sophie has accepted our invitation to come back to Claremont to meet with our current drama students. She has a wealth of experience and advice to share about both the triumphs and difficulties within the industry. She said: *"With acting you have to go for it and put everything into it. It's worth it because that feeling is the most incredible feeling. I'm so grateful to do what was once my hobby as my job. If you put yourself out there you can achieve your goal and don't be scared because it's so worth it."*

If you would like to connect with Sophie, register at [claremontfancourtalumni.co.uk](https://claremontfancourtalumni.co.uk) and click on network to search for Sophie or other members of our alumni community.



Sophie pictured far left

MAMMA MIA! LONDON 2019 - 2020 CAST. PHOTO BY BRINKHOFF/MÖGENBURG



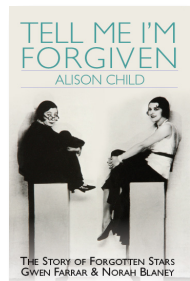
# ALUMNI NEWS



## TELL ME I'M FORGIVEN BOOK LAUNCH

### Alison Child, nee Cook (1972-1981)

In the early 1980s, history with Mrs Blanks was Alison Cook's favourite lesson at Claremont and her success in the subject won her a place at Trinity College, Cambridge. Thirty years later a subject grabbed her attention when, by chance, she discovered grainy and silent 1920s movie footage on YouTube of England's first female musical comedy double act; Gwen Farrar and Norah Blaney.



Alison is now the proud author of Tell Me I'm Forgiven: The Story of Forgotten Stars Gwen Farrar and Norah Blaney; a 90,000 word biography about the pair which was published by Tollington Press in October 2019. For those interested, a twenties-themed launch event will take place on Saturday 7 March 2020 at Effingham Golf Club. Visit [www.behindthelines.info/diary](http://www.behindthelines.info/diary) for more details.

## CLASS OF 1981 REUNION

When we were contacted by **Katie Johnson, nee Penrose (class of 1981, Norwood)** to help her organise a reunion at the school we were happy to assist. On Saturday 19 October we welcomed back 21 pupils from the class of 1981 for afternoon tea in the Great Room of the mansion. Those returning included **Alison Child (nee Cook), Joy Godwin, Maria Cripps (nee Dalrymple), Alison Chamberlin, Lisa Frank (nee Fancett), Nicky Richards (nee Forsyth)** and **Fiona Garapola (nee MacKinnon)** who is now based in the USA. Following the reunion the class set up a WhatsApp group so that they can now stay in regular contact with each other.

### Diana Taylor-Divagnau, nee Taylor (1989-1994, Longcross)

returned for a visit from Montpellier, France with her mother and two children. Diana is one of five siblings who attended Claremont Fan Court School and has fond memories of her time here.



If you would like to share your memories of your time spent at Claremont School or Fan Court School, or arrange a visit we would be delighted to hear from you. Please email [alumni@claremontfancourt.sch.uk](mailto:alumni@claremontfancourt.sch.uk)



# ALUMNI EVENTS

## LONDON DRINKS RECEPTION 2020

an invitation from headmaster, Mr William Brierly

**Bankside Gallery, London**  
**Wednesday 18 March 2020 at 6.30pm**

Fast becoming a regular event for the Claremont Fan Court School community, our alumni are invited to meet, share ideas and network.

The Bankside Gallery is located next door to the Tate Modern on London's Southbank with stunning views across the Thames to St Paul's.

**RSVP Saturday 29 February**



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Friday 28 February 2020 | Claremont Fan Court Charity Fashion Show**

**7pm - 8.30pm** The school is looking for clothing brands/retailers who would like to support a fashion show fundraiser in support of the WWF and Ben Kinsella Trust. Please get in touch for more information!

### **Thursday 12 March 2020 | Careers Evening**

**6.30pm - 8.30pm (set up from 5pm in the mansion)**

If you would like to come along and support our careers evening we would love to hear from you. We are looking for people to speak to our students about their careers, their career progression and your insights into your industry.



### **Wednesday 18 March 2020 | London Drinks Reception**

**6.45pm - 9.00pm.** See above for full details.



# SIR SYDNEY CAMM SCIENCE AND TEC

We have been delighted to welcome the academic year in with the opening of our wonderful new Sir Sydney Camm science and technology building.

The inspirational new building boasts 13 new teaching spaces including 8 purpose-built science class rooms, a design and technology studio and workshop, a magnificent food and nutrition classroom together with an inspirational textiles space.

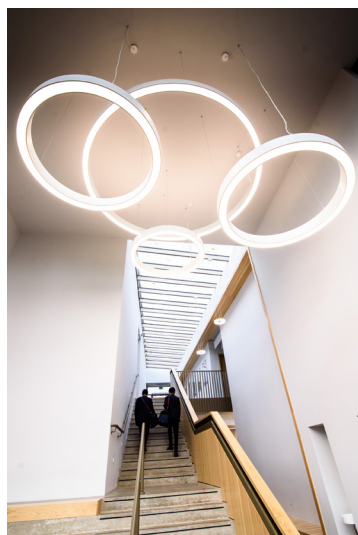
This superb development, with its state of the art facilities, really is the icing on our already successful science and technology cake!

View an online gallery of the new building via:  
[www.claremontfancourtalumni.co.uk/galleries/view](http://www.claremontfancourtalumni.co.uk/galleries/view)





# TECHNOLOGY



“ Claremont Fan Court already has a strong reputation for science and technology. The Sir Sydney Camm building now provides a modern space with exceptional facilities for high-quality teaching and learning opportunities. ”

Mr David Ridings  
Head of faculty: science and technology



# JOYCE GRENFELL 40 YEARS ON



The 30 November 2019 marks 40 years since the passing of much-loved comedian, singer and actress Joyce Grenfell OBE. A pupil at Claremont Fan Court School (then known as Clear View School) between 1924-1928, Joyce went on to delight audiences around the world with her performances on the radio, television, in films and on stage.

Joyce Grenfell's memory lives on at the school through our wonderful arts centre known as the JGC (Joyce Grenfell Centre). The building stands as an integral part of school life within the heart of the school campus and remains a hive of activity housing our music school, drama studios, staging

area and dining hall.

Countless budding musicians, singers and actors have graced the stage in the JGC over the years at Claremont Fan Court, not to mention the many outstanding drama productions and musicals performed annually to packed out audiences. This year, our Senior School cast will perform the musical 'We Will Rock You' – tickets will be available to buy online via [www.thelittleboxoffice.com/claremont](http://www.thelittleboxoffice.com/claremont) in the New Year.

Phase two of the our whole school development master plan will see the JGC expanded and enhanced,

meeting the needs of our growing school and ensuring the centre remains an inspirational performance space for many more years to come. An exciting plan to enhance the JGC has been proposed, including an expansion of our music school; an enlarged performance space with raked seating; and a new refectory big enough to seat 300 pupils and provide an additional meeting space for parent and public events. We also have plans to create a new centennial library (marking the school's foundation in 1922), three times larger than our current library, it will serve the whole school embracing all forms of research.



## JOYCE GRENFELL CENTRE A SPACE TO GROW

The Joyce Grenfell Centre has served us well, as the senior and prep dining hall and as a space for meetings and performances – but we have now outgrown it. We will fund a significant part of our redevelopment work on the Joyce Grenfell Centre via fundraising and donations. If you can support this project, please contact Mrs Kelly Hilder [development@claremont.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:development@claremont.surrey.sch.uk). For more information about our development plans and how you can support the school, visit [www.claremontfancourt.co.uk/supportus](http://www.claremontfancourt.co.uk/supportus).



# SCHOOL NEWS



## QUESTION TIME FOR ESHER AND WALTON CANDIDATES

Claremont Fan Court School hosted its first question time on Monday 18 November, welcoming candidates Dominic Raab (Conservative), Monica Harding (Liberal Democrat) and Peter Ashurst (Labour) to a lively meeting in which over 150 pupils had the opportunity to ask the prospective MPs about how they would manage the environment, street crime, education and the health challenges of the future.

It was an engaging and energising experience for our pupils, helping them to form a deeper understanding of party policies and greater sympathies for opposing political arguments. The school also ran its own mock election on 12 December called 'Claremont Decides'.



## REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

The Worshipful the Mayor of the Borough of Elmbridge, Councillor Mary Sheldon and her Consort John Sheldon and school Governors joined Claremont Fan Court School on Friday 8 November for a beautiful Senior School Remembrance Service.



## PREP SCHOOL WIGLOO

In addition to a poetry reading final and mufti day in support of the Just One Tree initiative ([www.justonetree.life](http://www.justonetree.life)), pupils helped to build a wigloo located in the the playground. Once the willow branches grow an established root system, the wigloo will grow leaves in the spring.



## CHRISTMAS NATIVITIES IN THE PRE-PREP AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Christmas is a special time of year in the the Pre-Prep and Nursery School. All of the children from across the school participate in wonderful Christmas productions, taking to the stage to deliver their lines and sing their songs.

Year 1 and 2 performed *Lights, Camel, Action* which followed the story of a Christmas talent show featuring performances from all the nativity characters. The Early Years children performed a more traditional nativity to delighted parents and grandparents. It is a magical time for families and we thank our teaching staff for all their hard work during such a busy term.



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW



**Luke Richards**

**Class of 2019, Esher**

Luke Richards has released his first single 'Give Me More' and his recent gigs in the area have sold out. Luke went on to study at The Academy of Contemporary Music in Guildford after his time at Claremont Fan Court School. For a taste of Luke's music visit his website [www.lukerichardsofficial.com](http://www.lukerichardsofficial.com) where you can also find more information on his upcoming live shows.

We wish Luke all the best in his upcoming performances.

**Tor Burks (nee Victoria Sykes)**

**Class of 2007, Norwood**

Tor has spent a number of years working as a management consultant for prestigious venues around London, planning big weddings and parties. In 2017 she started her own wedding planning company 'Victoria Sykes', Specialising in marque weddings. Tor lives in Esher, Surrey with her husband Will and recently popped back for a tour of the school. <https://victoriasykesevents.com>



**Miranda Ash (nee Tarver)**

**Class of 1992, Norwood**

Miranda Ash earned a BA in Sociology and Biology from Principia College in the US and a Post Graduate Diploma in Creative Art Therapies from Roehampton University, London. Since 2009 Miranda has been on a quest to transform organisations worldwide to freedom centred business models with the company WorldBlu. As Chief of Community, Miranda coach's individuals and speaks at events across the world: [www.worldblu.com/tribeblu](http://www.worldblu.com/tribeblu)



# FAMILIAR FACES

## A FAREWELL TO CHRIS SAGE

At the end of the autumn term, we said a fond farewell to Christina Sage. After 19 years as music administrator, Chris has decided to take a break from work in favour of a 3 month cruise, circumnavigating the whole of the continent of South America - and who can blame her?!

*"I had the pleasure of meeting Chris nearly 13 years ago when I became the school's director of music. Chris had taken full ownership of the administration role, making it what it is today, which meant I could not have asked for a better start to my new post.*

*There was never a dull moment working with Chris in the music school. She always handled her long list of jobs efficiently, whether it be placating parents of children who had failed to attend instrumental lessons, organising music events, to the huge undertaking of checking scores of violins for damage. Chris was an enthusiastic member of the school choir and often worked many hours beyond her half days, such was her dedication and professionalism. She always worked quietly and methodically, hand on the tiller, making sure that each and every music event ran smoothly.*

*The peripatetic instrumental teachers and I will miss her dearly, not only as a consummate professional, but as a dear friend. On behalf of the whole school and every department Chris has had dealings with over the 19 years, I would like to thank her and wish her a bon voyage on her travels."*

Alexis Affonso, director of music



## FROM THE ARCHIVE

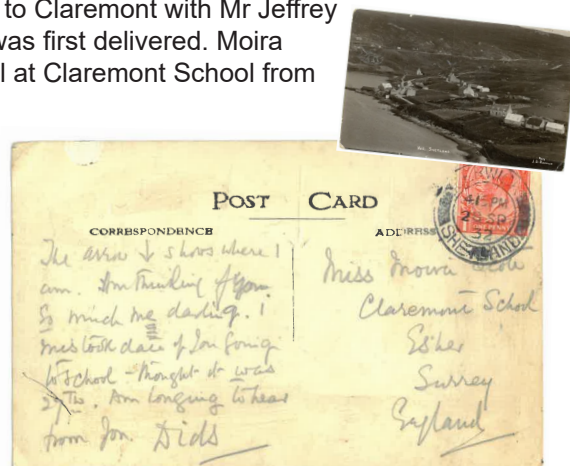
**From our previous edition:** Thank you to Samantha Wyatt, nee Hamblen (class of 1984, Norwood) for helping us to identify these smiley faces: (l-r) Catherine Moon, Heidi Teuiger, Waveney Gooding, James ?, Bryn Downing and Nathan Dougan.



## A POSTCARD FROM THE SHETLANDS

While visiting Edinburgh recently Mr Jeffrey (history teacher) purchased a set of old postcards to use as a teaching resource. On sorting through the set, he discovered this postcard, dated 1932 and sent to a Claremont pupil from a friend/family member who was on holiday in Shetland. This postcard had travelled from Shetland to Esher and then ended up back in Edinburgh, only to be returned back to Claremont with Mr Jeffrey 87 years after it was first delivered. Moira Scott, was a pupil at Claremont School from 1932 to 1933.

If you know/  
knew Moira we  
would love to  
hear from you.







## HOW ARE WE DOING?

If you enjoyed reading this latest edition of the alumni newsletter, please drop us a line and let us know what you liked most.

## GET INVOLVED IN OUR NEXT EDITION

Contact us to share your story with the Claremont Fan Court alumni community or make suggestions as to what you'd like to see in future editions.

You can opt out of receiving future editions of the newsletter at any time. To do this, please contact us using the contact details below.

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