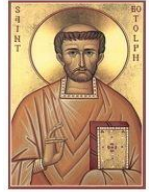




# The Botolphian

Newsletter of  
The Society of Saint Botolph

[www.botolph.info](http://www.botolph.info)



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President: Revd Timothy L'Estrange, Vicar of St.Gabriel's Church, North Acton.

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1st November 2017

## Highlights this month

- St Botolph's church, Frosterley, Durham.
- It gives me great pleasure to welcome the following members who joined the society during my lecture tour of Saint Botolph's American home, Boston Massachusetts:

FROM BOSTON (USA): Sean Kelly, Priscilla Deck, William Taylor, Jeremy & Amy de Rham, Arch Horst, Lisa Connors, Mark Churchill, Ruth Carey, Timothy Carey, Michael Halperson, Colby Andrus, Alice Andrus, Frederick Meyer, Rev Dr Howard Hunter, Jean Gibran, Wendy Hale.

FROM BURLINGTON (USA): John Tuccardi, Susan Stewart, Christine McCarthy, Albert Fay, Daniel Brenneke, Beverlee Vidoli, Paul Mitchell, Roger Bell, Don Bernstein, Rose Minitex.

FROM CHELSEA (USA): David Mindlin, Mitch Michaud, Bill Zamparelli, Maureen Foley, Sue Gallant, Jeannette McWilliams, Douglas Mauch, Rick Cernow, Joseph Panetta.

FROM DEVIZES (UK) Mo and Mike Edwards.

- Correspondence from Judith Everitt, Anne Dickinson, Heather Flack, Revd Mary Sokanovic, Jane Wheeler, Mo Edwards, Guy Hartfall and Paul Kemsley.

## Editorial

My word but there is a lot to report this month!

### **SOSB Annual Luncheon at Cambridge 4 Oct.**

No sooner did we return from the Mediterranean than it was time to head for Cambridge for the

Fifth Annual Luncheon of the Society. I must say that the consensus of opinion was that this was the best Luncheon so far - so whereas I was beginning to get rather despondent and feeling that we should discontinue the event, the warmth and enthusiasm of all whom attended has persuaded me that it should be held again next year.



Much of its success of course was due to the skill of the eminent historian **Roy Tricker** who gave us a wonderful lecture entitled: *Amazing Iken - Botolph's Holy Place*. I have frequently searched in vain for something amusing to say in talks about Saint Botolph but somehow Roy managed to treat the subject with great humour and we all learned a great deal and enjoyed Roy's delightful way of putting his message across.



### Lecture tour to Boston Massachusetts 12 Oct.

As you will see from the list of new members, my Botolph Tour seemed to be very well received in America and created a lot of interest. Zina and I had a wonderful time and we are very grateful for the kindness shown to us by everyone; it was an experience we shall relish for the rest of our lives.

The purpose of the trip was of course to raise the profile of Saint Botolph and I am sure we achieved that. Special mention and particular thanks must go to **Roger Howlett** who organised the visit and ensured that we were well-entertained whilst we were there.

**Michael Halperson**, President of the Saint Botolph Club, and all its members were so kind and **Peter Van Demark** gave up a great deal of his time to take us on a superb visit to the beautiful Rockport area. I must also thank **Buell Hollister** for picking us up at the airport and ensuring that we arrived safely at the club. I would so like to mention more names and insert a fuller report but space and time do not allow at the moment.



I was also particularly delighted to be able to visit the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Brookline where I was at last able to meet (face-to-face) Father Pachomius who, over the years, has become a great friend via the joys of email; I now count him as a *dear* friend. He kept us chuckling from the time we arrived until the time we left - although for a short while we did manage a few profound conversations.

I gained the impression that the *Entente Cordiale* between the St Botolph Club of Boston and the Society of Saint Botolph in the United Kingdom is such that we might be able to cooperate with each other in a variety of ways.



This could result in the issue of *The Tie* being resurrected. It occurs to me that if it were produced as a *Saint Botolph Tie* (rather than specifically as an SBC or SOSB tie) it would appeal to members of both clubs and would therefore double the sales' potential. If successful we could move on to ladies' scarves and pin badges. It might even raise a few funds for our impoverished club to the extent that one day we could afford to pay a few £s to speakers at our Annual Luncheons?

### Church Feature

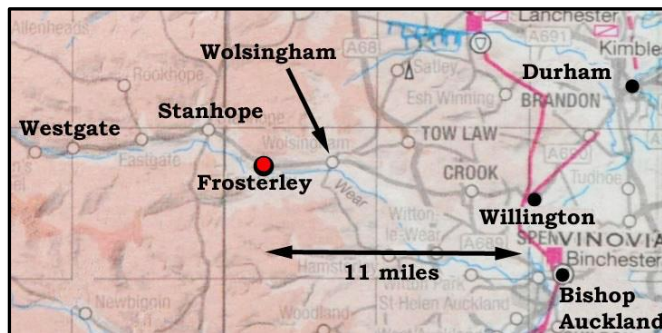
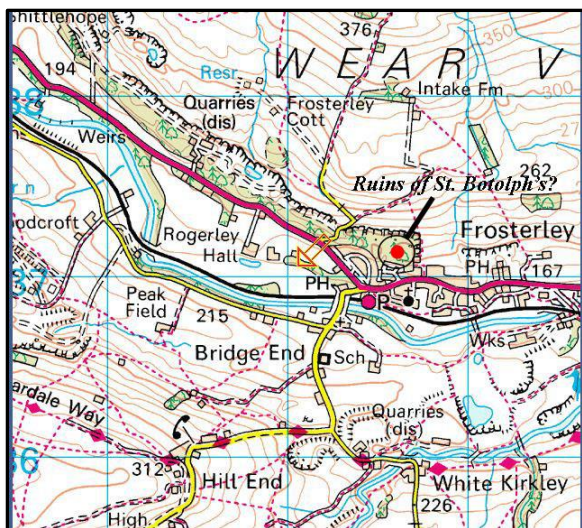
## Frosterley, Durham

**Approach:** From the A1(M) heading north turn off at Junction 58 and take the A68 towards Darlington/Bishop Auckland/Corbridge for 14 miles. At the roundabout take the first exit on the A689 towards Wolsingham and Stanhope for 11 miles. After entering the village you will eventually see Frosterley Village Hall on your right and access to the car park is immediately after that.

**Location:** In Front Street, 280 metres NE of Frosterley Bridge. Lat/Long: 54.727354, -1.961856.



This month we are featuring the most northerly of the Saint Botolph Churches. Frosterley lies 16 miles to the west south west of Durham in the county of the same name. It is 234 miles north of London.



These latter three settlements were also served by a Roman road (shown in red above) although the nearest road lies 11 miles away from Frosterley - rather further than the 3 miles that we usually find.

Sadly, like Bale church which was featured last month, only the foundations remain but unlike Bale their location is not difficult to find.



In the car park there is a block of stone which reminds us that Frosterley is famous for its source of marble.

## THE SITE

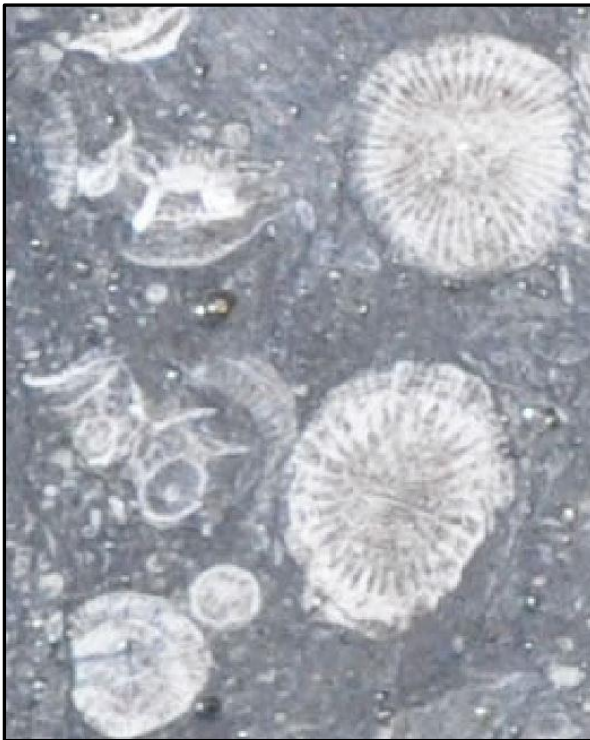
### The Site

The site, which is a scheduled ancient monument, is on a field behind a car park which lies on an ancient trackway that follows the River Wear from Wearhead via Westgate, Eastgate and Stanhope to Wolsingham. Here the road divides for Durham, Willington or Bishop Auckland.

The nearby plaque tells us: *Frosterley Marble was formed during the Carboniferous Period, 325 million years ago. During this period a variety of marine life including Colonies of Coral inhabited the warm shallow sea which covered North Eastern England. The skeletons of these creatures were buried in the silt which hardened to form beds of limestone which contained the fossils of these sea creatures.*



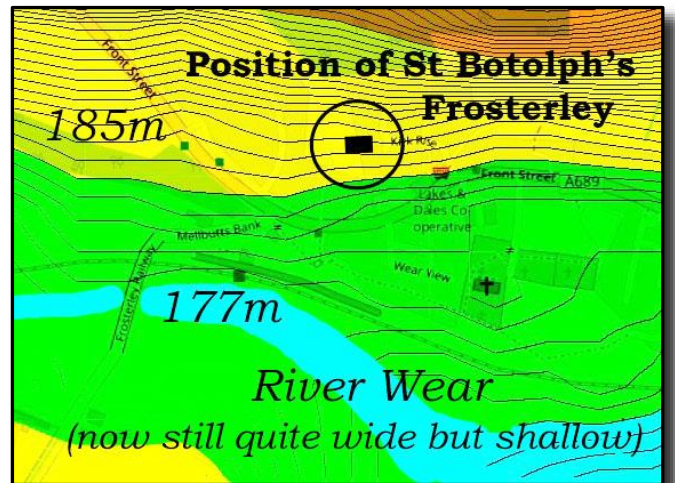
*The stone has been prized as a decorative building material since C13. When cut and polished the grey stone takes on a shiny black appearance which contrasts with the white fossil formations. Examples of the stone can be seen at Durham Cathedral and Auckland Castle.*



Many of you will probably find that you have examples of this type of marble in your own churches; we certainly do at Holy Trinity, Folkestone - although I am not sure if it came from Frosterley itself.



Close to the marble block is a sign pointing to Botolph's Mound. Although the mound measures 30 metres East-West by 22 metres North-South - this does not represent the dimensions of the former chapel as we will see later.



As usual the church is on the lower slopes of an escarpment and is a healthy 8 metres or so above the river's water level.

I am indebted to Paul Frodsham and the **North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (NPAP)** for much of the following information which was published under the auspices of the **University of Durham** in their Project Design for an Archaeological Excavation at Frosterley.

The exciting thing about the Frosterley church is that it is thought to be one of the rare examples of a pre-Norman Conquest building site to be found in this area where there is a great dearth of archaeological evidence between the dates of AD 410 and 1066.

The ***Boldon Book*** - published in 1183 - is Northumberland and Durham's equivalent to the Domesday Register and it is here where the name of 'Frosterley' is first mentioned. It is thought to be Anglo-French in origin and to mean 'a clearing in the forest.' The first historical record of the chapel itself was in 1346 and the next was in 1522 when it was owned by the squires of nearby Stanhope who advertised for a priest in that year. In 1797 W. Hutchinson (*The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham. 3 vols. Newcastle upon Tyne*) wrote:

*The chapel named in the records has been many years disused and gone to decay, the site of it only known by the name of the Chapel Close, which the field where it stood retains.*

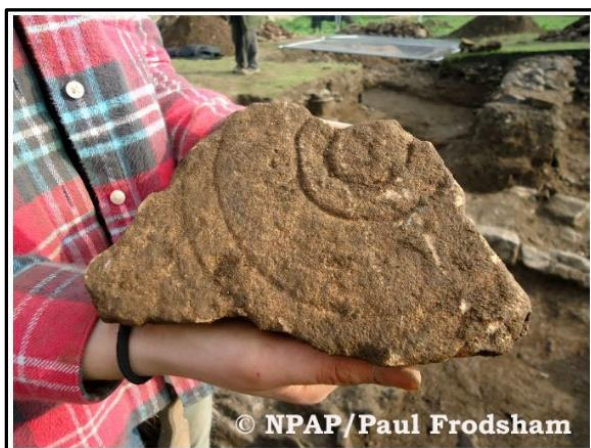
It would seem therefore that it only survived the Reformation by 100 years or so.

The site has seen excavations by the Archaeological Services of Durham University in the years 1995 and 2013. They found that the church's external measurements were 16.25 metres by 4.98 metres and that it had a painted plastered interior and a stone tile roof.

## THE CROSSES

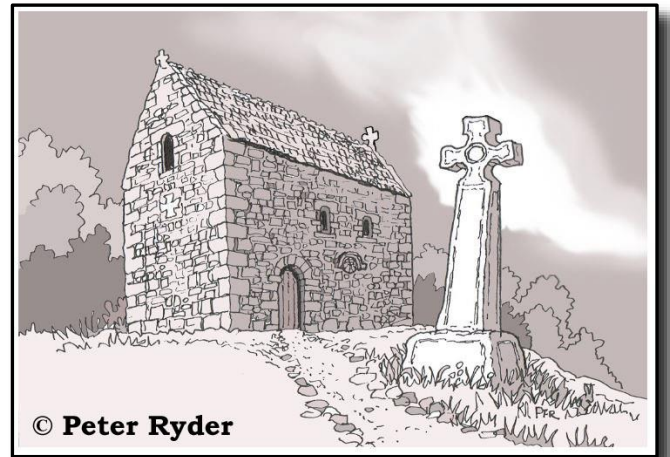
### The Frosterley Cross head

A (possibly C8) Anglo-Saxon cross head was discovered buried within the ruins. It was made of Roker Dolomite - a fossiliferous limestone of which the only known source is near the monastery of Monkwearmouth, - which, incidentally was founded in 674 - only 20 years later than St Botolph's abbey of Icanho.



Monkwearmouth lies 26 miles to the northeast of Frosterley and, as Paul Frodsham tell us, "would have had extensive workshops run by the most skilled craftsmen of the time. It is assumed that the

Frosterley cross must have been made there and then transported up the Wear."



The artist Peter Ryder depicts the cross standing outside the chapel as shown above.

### The Iken Cross shaft

The discovery of the cross is of course interesting to us because it echoes the 1977 discovery of the cross shaft (shown below) at St Botolph's Church Iken. It has been suggested that the function of the Iken cross was to mark the site of St Botolph's grave after the church had been desecrated by the Vikings.



### The Carlton-in-Cleveland Cross base

We also have the base of a cross at St Botolph's Church, Carlton-in-Cleveland as shown below.



When I featured this church in the December 2015 issue I wrote:

*In the churchyard itself there is even the base of a cross which local legend tells us was crafted by a master stone mason who was part of Botolph's entourage when he visited Carlton in 675. The legendary concept is that the mason erected such crosses at places where Botolph had been successful in getting the word of God across to the local people. I noted that the base of the cross was of similar dimensions to those of the cross shaft found at Iken although it shows no sign of Iken Cross's Celtish-style decoration. One might regard Carlton's claims doubtfully but who are we (at such a great chronological distance) to deny that Saint Botolph did visit this far north? It is interesting that the plausible date of 675 is specified for Saint Botolph's visit since that would have been right at the end of his tenure as Abbot of Icanho.*

So we now, at different churches, have a base, a shaft and a head of a cross and in other circumstances we might consider that they constitute the full set were it not for the fact that they are all made of different stone.

### THE VILLAGE

Regarding the village, Paul Frodsham writes: *References to 'Bot's Well' in the vicinity of the chapel suggest an early religious association.*

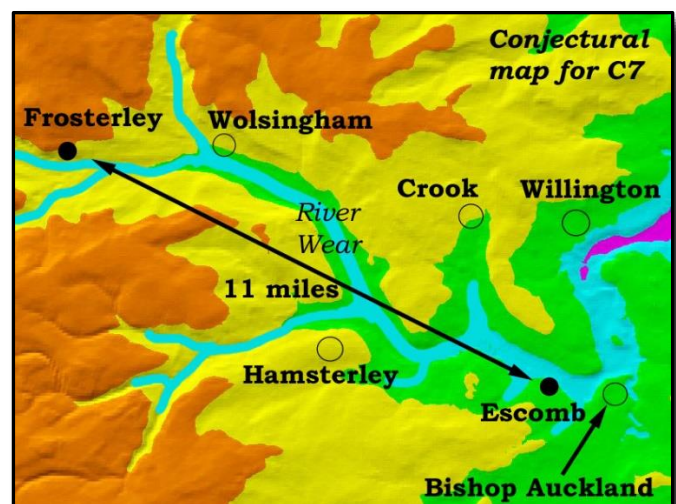
*Holy wells frequently relate to late Romano-British or early Saxon shrines, and many of these later developed into chapel, church or monastic sites. If the original well was dedicated to St Botolph, it may indeed be a much earlier precursor to the chapel mentioned in the 14th century. The name 'Bottlingham', which still survives within the village, is of Anglo-Saxon origin, and is perhaps the original name of the village.*

### THE AREA

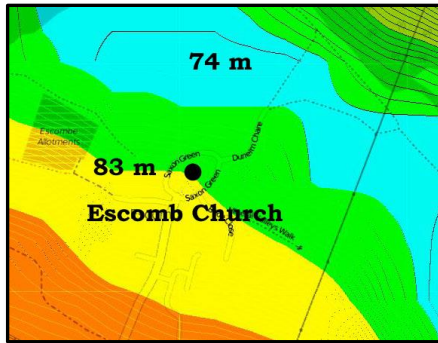
Only 11 miles away to the southwest there stands the village of Escomb which contains what is widely regarded as one of the best and most complete examples of Saxon churches. It is well worth a visit should you ever be in the area.



It is dedicated to St John rather than St Botolph but this seems to be a post-Reformation patronage and I suppose that there is an outside chance that it might also have been a Botolph church in its earlier days - but I should stress that this is only a hopeful hunch for which I have no actual evidence - other than the fact that it satisfies Botolphian criteria.



You will note that the River Wear's water level at Escomb is only 74 metres above sea level as compared with 177 metres at Frosterley. A fall of 100 metres in 11 miles is quite a drop and at Frosterley this spate river would have been a wide, shallow and forceful stream draining the upper hills. It seems highly unlikely that it would have been suitable for transporting goods upstream and going downstream would have been a bumpy ride.



There are two weirs in the lower reaches further down at Durham, both of which were built for industrial purposes. It seems likely that 1400 years ago water transport would have been feasible from the mouth of the river as far inland as where Durham now stands but no further.

Although there is archaeological evidence that a settlement existed in Durham as long ago as 2000 BC neither Durham nor Bishop Auckland were places of any significance before the end of C10 so neither of them would have been relevant when the churches of Frosterley and Escomb were young.

Before concluding I feel that I should mention St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (634-687), a contemporary of St Botolph who shared similarities with our saint in that he too was a missionary monk.



Durham was at the southernmost tip of *his* patch just as Frosterley was at the northernmost tip of Botolph's. After several translations St Cuthbert was eventually enshrined in Durham Cathedral.

### Classification

It seems clear that this this chapel has Saxon foundations. The main question is whether they are C10, C8 or C7. The archaeologists seem to favour C8 but bearing in mind the chapel's dedication it would seem that C7 is also a possibility. If it were not founded by Saint Botolph or his disciples one wonders why it should be dedicated to him?

If it lasted from, say 670 to 1670, I wonder who was paying for its upkeep? As far as I know it was unattached - i.e. not part of an ecclesiastical circuit - and this was probably the reason for its eventual demise.

In conclusion I would classify it as A(ii) - founded in C7 as a result of one of Botolph's missionary journeys into the northern wastes. He might well have founded the church in Carlton-in-Cleveland at the same time. Bearing in mind the nature of the River Wear I would guess that Botolph made his journey over land rather than by sea.

### Readers' letters and emails.

1. I received a dozen or so emails from members thanking me for the last issue of *The Botolphian* - such emails are always welcome - thank you.
2. I also received half a dozen emails thanking me for organising the Annual Luncheon - and I am grateful for those too. I am sorry about the luncheoners who, like me, opted for the *lamb* which, on probing, seemed to be 'mutton dressed as ...' and was far below the standards one would expect of the Hilton. I have made representations to the hotel but I am not anticipating a refund. The rest of the meal choices, the service and the accommodation were generally felt to be excellent.
3. **Judith Everitt** (from Bale) wrote thanking me for the last issue - i.e. the one that featured her church ... or its foundations at least.
4. **Anne Dickinson** wrote from Burton Hastings regarding the £75,000 extension they are planning for their church. Much of the money has been raised but there is a £25,000 shortfall and Anne wondered if I had any ideas regarding the raising of funds. Always a ticklish problem. My friend Duncan Hopkin (an SOSB member) offered a few suggestions but if any other church has managed to conquer similar problems I would be pleased to hear from them.

5. **Heather Flack** wrote from Bewdley, Worcs., giving notice that the second volume in her series of historical novels has just been published and is entitled 'Edward the Exile.'

6. **Revd Mary Sokanovic** wrote from St Botolph's Westwick where they had a break-in recently which destroyed half of one of their stained glass windows. Mary wondered if I had a high-resolution photograph of the window that could be used to help the restorer. Fortunately I did - so that provides another *raison d'être* for our society.

7. **Jane Wheeler** wrote from Bale as a result of the last newsletter. She said: *It's very interesting. I always understood a medieval chapel was for praying for the souls of the dead rather than for ordinary worship, and not for burying the dead either. There is a record of the chapel being left money in a will in the early 1500's so I don't think it was there before All Saints. All a bit of a puzzle, especially as the archaeologist said the body under the pub snug room was probably from the 1600's.*

I have asked Jane if there is any chance of a group from Bale looking into the matter further as there are still some mysteries to be solved here.

8. **Mo Edwards** wrote from Devizes (as a result of one of our previous conversations) pointing out that the 'art' portrayed in Botolph Churches (especially in stained glass windows) is another aspect which might merit attention. I intend to follow Mo's line of thinking and see where it leads.

9. **Guy Hartfall and Paul Kemsley** wrote at the beginning of the month about an article in the Daily Telegraph where Saint Botolph was mentioned as occupying one of the niches in the Bridge Chapel at Wakefield, Yorks. This, no doubt was in his capacity as Patron Saint of Wayfarers. I have been unable to find a photograph of the statue itself so if anybody is passing that way I would be grateful for a picture. Paul wrote (and had published) a reply letter to the Daily Telegraph in which he pointed out that the Bridge Chapel at St Ives was not listed in the original article. Funnily enough, as I write this, I have just realised that there was also a Bridge Chapel in the City of Rochester where Paul and I went to school - except that the chapel was ashore at Rochester Bridge's western end rather than being in the middle.

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Please do not hesitate to write to me or send an email to [botolph@virginmedia.com](mailto:botolph@virginmedia.com) if you have any alternative views to those expressed in *The Botolphian*. It is good to engender some controversy from time to time!

#### REGULAR END-NOTES

If this is your first *Botolphian* and you have acquired it by circuitous means but would like to receive an email copy each month then just send an email to [botolph@virginmedia.com](mailto:botolph@virginmedia.com) saying 'YES PLEASE.' If you wish to UNsubscribe then send the message 'NO THANKS.'

You will frequently see the 'twin' towns of *Boston* mentioned in these newsletters, - one in Lincolnshire and the other in Massachusetts USA. The relevance to the Society is that the name 'Boston' is said to be a contraction of '*Botolph's Town*.'

#### Classification of Botolph Church sites:-

- A: **C7 church sites** relevant to Botolph's life.  
(i) Founded by radiation from Botolph centres.  
(ii) Founded along the course of Botolph's journeys.
- B: **Travellers' churches.**  
(i) Founded before AD 800  
(ii) Founded between 800 and 1066  
(iii) Founded after the Norman Conquest.
- C: **Hanseatic churches** founded as a result of commercial enterprise.
- D: None of the above.

#### Typical Characteristics of Early St Botolph Churches.

1. Nearly all are in the eastern half of England
2. Most have Saxon foundations.
3. Many lie with 3 miles of a Roman road or well-used waterway.
4. Most are situated close to the bottom of an escarpment but well clear of water levels.
5. Many are strategically placed in areas which represent the beginnings, middles and ends of long journeys.

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