

# The Bulletin

Newsletter of the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc. #844 October-November 2024



*Climbing Sebastopol, Mt Cook Weekend. 19-20 October 2024. Pic Rodger Clarkson*

October and November saw the club in fine fettle overall. October however was marred by some poor weather in which South Dunedin was again flooded and various slips around the region closed roads. Two trips were canceled as a result of rain: the second attempt at the Government Track and the long-weekend Rees-Dart circuit. Otherwise there were two highly successful multi-day, multi-activity trips – to Mt Cook and Milford – featuring day trips from a base. Of particular note was the ribbon-cutting of Leaning Lodge in November which is now formally open for business on the slopes of the Rock and Pillar Range.

Oct. 12 Old Pineapple Track  
13 Government Track 3.0  
**19-20 Mt Cook/Unwin Lodge**  
20 Three Peak Challenge

Nov. 2 Dog-friendly walk  
3 Stone Hill

9 Leaning Lodge Opening  
10 Trotter's Gorge (family)  
17 Warrington Spit  
**23-24 Milford**  
24 Peninsular Walk

Dec 1 Hermit Ridge

## President's Piece

With the end of the year 2024 rapidly approaching it is about time I made some contribution to the Bulletin. I hope you all agree there has been a good selection of activities on offer over the past year. Day Trips have included Saturdays and Sundays, and a smattering of Family focused 'easier' destinations. Overnight trips have focused on Weekends as expected, with the welcome addition of a bunch of multi day excursions. Thursday nights have kept us entertained with a range of talks from both club members and others, generally related to tramping or outdoor themes generally. All these trips and activities require someone with initiative and energy to plan and run, and anyone can see that most of this comes down to the committee members. If there are club night talks / activities, or Day or longer trips you would like to see included, please feel free to talk to any committee member, or me, or email the Bulletin Editor to get your comments include. In previous years 'Letters to the Editor' was a regular feature expressing various thoughts. You should also feel free to offer yourself as a potential trip Leader (or even Co-Leader with someone else) either to a familiar destination or to get that trip you've always been waiting for. This seems an appropriate time to remind members that among the useful features on the club's website, is a 'OTMC Resources' tab which includes a bunch of useful guidelines including a 'Trip Participant's Guide' offering sage advice for all on trips to help them run safely and enjoyably and helping to make the Trip Leaders job more satisfying. How many habitually carry a whistle? If you stop for something and find yourself alone with no sign of a track, and no response to your shouts – what do you do? 3 short blasts of a whistle, close together is an international distress signal and will penetrate bush better than your voice.

The biggest single thing recently (apart from the club's Centenary!) has been the official opening of Leaning Lodge in the Rock and Pillar Range. Successfully completed and consented under the expert guidance of John Cox and the Leaning Lodge Trust.

The Weekly Updates continue to keep us reminder of upcoming activities, and the Bulletin continues to entertain and remind us of recent past activities. Long may it all continue!

Wayne.

# T r i p   R e p o r t s

## **Sat 12 Oct. Old Pineapple Track-Pineapple Point Lookout.** By Alan Hanson.

One car left the meeting place from Woodhaugh to park in Tanner Road to meet the rest of the group who had traveled independently to Booth Road, the start of the Pineapple Track.

The morning was sunny and we were all excited to be off and use The “Old” Pineapple Track to the destination Pineapple Point.

Concerns were expressed about the suitability of this route being attempted so soon after the flooding event that had hit the south recently, but, let’s go and see. The pace to suite the age and size of the people in the party meant we all made the treatment plant easily. This was where we all turned



left and entered into the bush proper. The previous wide gravelled track closed in somewhat and more care was required to where one put your feet. The gradient had steepened slightly, but steady progress was made. Some short stops were made which meant the group was kept together, and able to exchange comments about the types of vegetation, lack of extreme mud and the general condition of the track for this group. Sustenance and water, as required, was given to those who needed it and steady progress was made. A steeper, not really a scramble, eventually saw us out in the open and slightly above the Pineapple Point area.

Lunch was eagerly taken, and after a last panoramic view of Dunedin the party continued down the regular track to the cars.

Thank you: Rebecca Armstrong, [leader], with seven other trampers, Amy Telfer-Chiles, Sannah Aitcheson (+ Eloise & Thea ), Rachael Nicol (+Jasmine) and Alan Hanson, [scribe], for another successful family friendly OTMC trip.

### **Sunday 13 October, Government Track, take 3. by Helen Emerson**

Eight of us set off on the Government Track take 3. Third time lucky and all that - the weather having conspired against us the previous two weeks we've attempted to schedule this walk. Today, we were going regardless. DOC's website said:

'Damage to the track is likely and the track may not be suitable for all track users. Staff have not assessed the condition of the track. Use with caution'

So with caution we approached the track and we can report there's no significant damages caused by the rains. It's boggy in all the places you'd expect it to be - in the gullies where the streams come down, and in the farm paddock where the cows have trampled as much as the trampers.

So off we go, and the nice thing about the Government Track is you know what you are

getting with the gradient, and there's a subtle slow change in the vegetation as you progress to the top. I love the beech trees - the track is so soft to walk on. The twists and turns through the gullies give you a good sense of where you



*Somewhere along the track. Pic H Emerson.*



are going and where you've come from and before you know it, you're at the top end of the track. Time for lunch!

We sat down in sunshine. All good. Those of us that ate quickly, managed to finish lunch in the sunshine - just before it started snowing. So lunch was hastily finished, jackets put on, and we prepared to set off back down the track.

Some say the Government Track is boring. We rather found an abundance of nature doing its thing - in addition to the weather - to keep us amused. Rob heard Cuckoos on the way up the track. They're apparently the first sign of spring (at least, in England ...), so it must be spring, despite the snow! We kept our eyes and ears peeled for signs of cuckoo on the way back and regardless of what we did or didn't see, we all believe Rob!

Also in abundance, red and purple mushrooms and clematis beside the track - which Amy claims to have seen and maybe one or two others can verify. Amy kindly marked one lot of mushrooms for us to see on our way back - marked by 'a distinctive piece of wood' she said - in a forest ... luckily it was near a trap so it was found with remarkable ease. Amazing how one piece of wood can still be distinguished in a forest of trees. Who said you can't see the wood ..

Eventually, despite nature's bid to stall us and the rain's efforts to soak us, we half jogged back to the cars to conclude a successful outing. Success at Take Three! A great day out, thanks to Rebecca for leading us.

Helen Emerson, for Rebecca Armstrong, Amy Telfer-Chiles, Alan Hanson, Aleksandra Kozyk, Alan Wang, Rob Seeley, and Jenny Forrest

### **18th - 20th October 2024. Mt Cook / Unwin Lodge . By Caitlin O'Neill**

In Dunedin you forget how close we really are to the tallest mountains in the country - on Friday all of the team traveled up to be amongst those giants again.

A few wee stops for ice-creams and other delights on our way to spend the evening at the foothills at the Unwin Lodge. This is where we say it's an amazing hut with plenty of character and life. The windows looking towards Tasman are to die for.

Our car-group went down to the Tasman lake to bask in the glory of the baby icebergs and generally meander across the rocky outcrops for photos. We teased each other for a swim in the lake and with the warm breeze it was very appealing. A few little droplet patterns our walk in the evening and then back to the Unwin lodge to have dinner and catch up with the rest of the gang.

Saturday the 13 of us set off to climb up to the Red Tarns and some even taking on Sebastopol. Its all up - little reprieve, just all up, stairs and more stairs,

climbing and clambering up and up. Lungs and legs were not impressed first thing in the morning.

Finally getting up to the red tans was a reprieve, taking in more breathtaking views of Mt Cook and the surrounds. It wouldn't last long though as the team decided the Big Rock followed by Sebastopol were easy picking.



*Ice with that? Rebecca takes a dip under the mountain.  
Respect. pic Caitlin.*

Slip and sliding up the scree slope (fyi: don't go up a scree slope, only down), we made it to the Big Rock where a much needed rest was in order.

A few stayed at red tarns, two made it to the big hill rock above the scree slope and the rest of the team made it all the way to the top of Sebastopol! Where they found snow.

Views from all of the climb was amazing. Down was another fun adventure: scree skiing. Not coming off Sebastol though - that's a bit rough - but between Big Rock and Red Tarns there was some light scree skiing. With at least a couple slipping over onto their rump- ha-ha.

Down the many stairs and

we all almost made it back to the car park. Michael had a little too luxurious dip in the river and forgot where the path was leading out. After spotting him in the Matagouri between the roadside and the river he hustled back to the car awaiting him on the state highway. Let's say Michael's sense of direction is questionable.

Back to the lodge for late lunch and I was easily convinced to go for an afternoon hike - so off to the Hooker we went! Walked up the Hooker with Rodger jumping in and out of the bushes getting all the action shots of us while we laughed at the tourist's outfits. Could not believe the amount of puffer jackets on such a warm day!

A few crazies took a dip in the baby iceberg lake, Caitlin, Michael, Rodger, Rebecca and Tina. Icebergs, people, 3 degree water! She was a little nippy! Did some hilarious photos taken on the lake front with our doppelgangers.... Hiking back, spotted Little Hooker Hut roof thanks to Rodger pointing it out and enjoyed the unusually warm weather - a beaut and busy wee day for us! Back for dinner, bananagrams and many amazing hot showers. Sunday was cruise mode with people visiting Tasman lake and Kea Point before the road trip back where we went to a kettlehole – literally a hole in the ground. Then a walk at Benmore where the drivers took the chance for a snooze while the rest stretched their legs once more before the final leg home. This trip had an excellent bunch of crazies that I would happily hike again anytime. Thanks for the fun and memories and leaders Rodger Clarkson and Sharon Campbell. Caitlin

### **Three Peaks Challenge, 28 October. By Ed.**

The idea for the day was to follow the yearly runner's three peak challenge in the more sedate fashion we trampers prefer – ie walking, carrying a bit of gear and making frequent stops for a bite and a look at the view. Seven people were up for the Challenge, a number that has been pretty consistent for the harder Sunday trips

By the time I'd got to Woodhaugh Gardens, the car exchange was all in place and all there was to do was pick up our bags and start up the Leith River track – no further motorised transport needed. A walk up through Ross Creek reserve took us to the bottom of the Pineapple Track, but it was the Davies Track we chose to take us to our first Peak, Flagstaff, as some where unfamiliar with it. The Davies Track (Mark informed us that in Wales it would be pronounced 'Davis') has much to offer the walker, being in three distinct phases: the zig-zagging section in re-growth forest, the fabulous section of native bush, and its top section of tussock and flax and that kind of thing where the views of the city are immense. Ideally, I think, it should join the Flagstaff ridge at the dip between the two peaks so that it would form a cross-roads with the wee track that goes over to the back and the firebreak track. But it doesn't and peak-baggers have to go back down to the aforesaid dip before the ascent to the concrete pipe that marks the true summit of Flagstaff. Two of the team decided that Little Flagstaff was all the Flagstaff they needed and, to save their energy, hung a right making for Swampy – we would meet up later.

The True Summit bagged, the remaining five retraced our steps to the dip, crossed over to the Firebreak track and, where it meets Swampy Ridge track,

stopped for morning tea. Here Gordon revealed that for him this was all new country – him a Dunedin boy too.

The day was turning out to be a real beauty and in sunny, windless conditions we carried on, sated, north along the Ridge track with peak two, Swampy summit, increasingly filling the view ahead. Pedants will say that the true summit of Swampy is the UFO at 720m but our leader ruled that today, the microwave tower was a perfectly acceptable alternative – it was, moreover, on our way.

Arriving at the great microwave tower (impressively bolted to terra-firma) we finally caught up with Lawrence and Sandra and here lunch proper was called, peak two bagged, though the UFO frowned at us accusingly throughout, clearly a bit higher than we were, over the intervening swamp.

Whereas Flagstaff and Swampy could be described, uncharitably, as pretty much the same bit of rock, Swampy and Mt Cargill can in no way be said to be so; there is the not-insignificant matter of Leith Saddle between them requiring a 450m descent followed by 400m back up. Down the Leith Saddle



*Flagstaff, from the Reservoir*

*HVS*

track we went then to arrive at the carpark an hour or so later. Amy was there, taking a break from house painting, to replenish our water bottles and offer chocolate. Sandra called it quits at this point but the rest of us strode on again, undaunted or mostly so, for the final peak of Mt Cargill.

Walking down the bit of the old road to Sullivan's dam the peak with its great TV tower looked distant indeed and this section proved the most demanding. From the reservoir we made for the three-peak track which takes the walker up a series of forest tracks before ending up on the Cargill service road (Cowan Rd). Trudging up this road we made the summit trig via the A H Reed track and flopped down for our final break before the end. Evening was creeping in by this



point and in the still air we had a fine view as sea-mist crept over Blueskin Bay. My reminding the group of some earlier-planned bagging of Buttars Peak was I have to say met with with some scorn and derision. And so it ended by the descent to Bethune's Gully (where two cars had been left), a bit of a plod to be sure and there were some less than stoic remarks concerning knees and hips. But the challenge was met, the peaks bagged and a very fine day out had been had.

Our thanks to Helen for another well led trip and Amy for essential backup.

Helen Emerson, Lawrence Prattley, Sandra Divett , Mark Stevenson, ?, Gordon Tocher, Rob Seeley.

### **Stone Hill. 3 November.** By Sabine de Klein

On the sunny morning of November 3rd, 12 enthusiastic trampers were ready for a beautiful hike in the lush green fields North of the Dunedin peninsula. Under the lead of Gordon - who does not only know a lot about hiking, but has many interesting stories about the history and nature of the area - the kickoff of the hike was Waipuna Bay on Aramoana Rd. Our hike involved some additional challenges, namely: don't let the sheep escape and CLOSE the gates. Gordon did not spare us: under the motto "the only way is up" our walk began straight up Stone Hill. This was rewarded with splendid views immediately. The ocean, the



*A reward for a stiff climb. Stone Hill. Pic: Ed.*

peninsula, and even inland snowy mountains were visible from this point - what a

beautiful area. After this breathtaking view, a little snack and hot tea for almost everyone, we followed Heyward Point Road and continued to walk down through some farmland to Kaikai Beach. During this walk, Gordon showed the invasive Gorse and the pepper plant to everyone new to New Zealand. Furthermore, we met some young cows along our route that were a bit too interested/enthusiastic for my liking. With everyone still onboard and alive we continued our journey to the fishing cave of the Lewis Family. The Lewis family consisted of 22 (!!!) children: no wonder they needed a spacious calm spot to get out of the house for relaxing and fishing. After only a few dunes, the white sand and blue waves of Kaikai beach welcomed us. The sandwiches and again the hot teas were pulled out: lunchtime! Lunch on a beautiful, sunny beach - that we had all for ourselves - is there anything more a human being can wish for? Fully recharged, our return journey began. We walked up Purehurehu Point ridge (anyone who can pronounce this properly?) to the Whareakeake Road. We ended our walk with a steep section down to Waipuna Bay and all looked back at a wonderful day of tramping.

We were with Colin Craig, Jeroen Hoexum, Shirley Welsh, Laurence Prattley, Jenny Forrest, Ricky Kim, Tom Kirk, Leonie Loeber, Rob Seeley, Mark Stephenson, Gordon Tocher and Sabine de Klein.

### **Leaning Lodge Opening, 9 November 2024 by Leonie Loeber**

The time to meet at the Clubrooms was 6.00am, there were a few 'oh no, I couldn't get up early enough' comments when Rebecca gave the preamble on the trip at the clubnight. The reason for the early start was because we had to be at the new Leaning Lodge Hut prior to the official opening at 12 noon. Early start or not there were nine of us ready to depart from the Clubrooms. We



*Sir Alan Mark opening the new Leaning Lodge. John Cox looks on. pic: Antony Pettinger.*

arrived at Kinvara Station car park at approximately 7.20 am and were walking at 7.30am, Richard was lucky enough to find a four-leaf clover, surely a good omen for the day. We had morning tea with stunning views over the Taieri Plains and thanks to Rebecca for pointing out the Taieri Crater, definitely a place worth exploring, but I understand that it is on private land. We had stunning views on the climb up with stunning rocks and flora and fauna.

We arrived at the hut at 11 am and had our lunch before the official proceedings started. John Cocks, Chair of Leaning Lodge Trust gave the official welcome, the guest speaker was Mick Abbott and Emiteus Professor Sir Alan Mark cut the ribbon. There was some snow near the hut, which added to the great photos. We began our walk down at approximately 1.20 and made it back to the car a couple of hours later.

On the way home, Rebecca stopped at the Middlemarch Museum where we had a look at the Platypus, designed and built in 1873 to prospect for gold.

Information can be found here

<https://www.middlemarch.nz/history/museum.html> and here <https://1964.co.nz/middlemarch-submarine/>

Another diversion was made to Maggie's for an icecream; a well-deserved treat at the conclusion of our 10km up and 10km down.

Thank you all for your company.

Leonie Loeber for Jan Birch, Madelaine Child, Sabrina de Klein, Tracey Pettinger, Richard Pettinger, Tina Anderson, Rebecca Armstrong, Helen Emerson.

### **Sunday 10th November. Totters Gorge Track (Family trip)**

(From Rebecca's overview): Starting from the Trotter's Gorge Road area, we will follow the Trotter's Gorge Track through native broadleaf forest to a set of river-sculpted caves. From here, we'll climb up through Kanuka forest and onto the bluffs for great views before descending to the track that we came in on. Approximately 2.5km return (caves are 700m) and will take around 2 hours.



*The overhang. pic Tom Kirk*

## **Sunday 17th November -Warrington Spit Walk + Warrington Hidden tracks (+Lower Evansdale Glen)**

Wow, we were so lucky with the weather: Saturday had been fairly damp and cold, but Sunday wasn't! Six of us met at Woodhaugh and we were joined by Jeroen who met us at the Warrington Surf club. There was a huge number of cars in the carpark - why?

I'd said that we'd have lunch at the cars, but it was good that no-one took any notice of me because we weren't at the carpark by lunchtime!

Walking began at 9.30, heading down the lagoon side of the Spit. Alas the tide wasn't quite out and the mud flats were a bit squelchy! But we got down, bypassing the worst bits by taking a sand-dune track. (Thanks Jeroen for good track-finding!)

Rounding the southern tip, the sand was much firmer on the ocean side of the Spit. A quick pause for a snack then on northwards along the beach

And then we found out why so many cars were at the start: there was a big surf-lifesaving competition! From children to teenagers and adults there were surfboards, surf-kayaks and swimmers moving at speed into, through, on, and out of the water!

But the seven of us settled onto the rocks at the far end of the beach for an early lunch. Sunshine and good company - what more could be wanted? Jenny wanted a swim - very brave in our waters! - and Jane wanted to look at rock pools because the tide was so very low. Found a starfish (or maybe an octopus) (It had 8 arms)! Hardly an enormous one - it would have fitted into the palm of a hand, but a pretty exciting find nonetheless.



After lunch we took a small track off the beach - steep but short - and then on grassy/muddy tracks to the wee church on a hill behind the village. An interesting wooden building with a shingle roof. The vicar was just closing up after Sunday service and allowed us a quick look around inside.

Back along different tracks to finish on roads and a quick walk to the cars.

We travelled home via Evansdale Glen for a short look, and then coffee-and-cake at the Blueskin Gallery.

Jane Cloete thanks her companions: Lucy Jones, Peter and Leonie Loeber, Ruth Thomas, Jenny Forrest and Jeroen Hoexum



## 23-24 November. Day trips around Milford Rd .

The trip led by Rebecca Armstrong was based at Homer Hut. On Saturday the team climbed to Gertrude Saddle in fine weather. Some of the more experienced members continued on to bag Barrier Knob.

On Sunday there was a visit to Milford Sound and a climb to Lake Marian where swimming was reported.



*On the Slabs - no cables. Pic Rodger Clarkson*



*Looking up at Barrier Knob. Pic: Roger*



*Sabine enjoying the freedom of crampons:*

*pic: Roger*



*Climbdown from Black Lake. pic Roger*



*Sergei above Milford sound from the Barrier Knob expedition. pic Ian Billinghamurst*

### **Sunday 1 Dec, Hermit Ridge.** By Helen Emerson

In his trip briefing, Rob requested that we bring a stoic mindset and plenty of water for this trip. Both were called upon - the water more than the stoic mindset given the fabulous early summer day that Dunedin turned on for us. Rob could have added 'bring a sense of humour'. But the day was way better than those words make it sound. This was a truly awesome day in the Silverpeaks - and in my books made all the better by requiring plenty of water and the right mindset. No-one ever said day tramping had to be easy, and the days that reward the most, usually require the most from you.

We parked at the usual place for forays into the Silverpeaks, and headed along the rather fabulous River Track. This track is a game-changer for days in the SPs - a couple of hours from the cars had us at the bottom of Hermit Ridge, and topping up our water and splashing our faces in the cooling water at Sculpture Rocks. It was already warm at 11.30am - and we have just been in the bush so far.

Upwards we go, up the steeply climbing Hermit Ridge track. It's beautiful - and so far the track is in good condition and perfectly navigable. We stop for first lunch (?) after 45 minutes at a nice flat opening and discuss whether we are going to need the tools we have bought with us. Steffan wielded his folding saw for demonstration purposes, and we felt confident we'd be able to bash our way

through whatever lay ahead. Another hour or so later (track still very good) we start to get our first views of Yellow Ridge. The bush is lower here - still just over head-height - and from here on the track starts getting a little narrower and more



*Almost there. Josh emerges from the dracophyllum. pic Helen.*

bush-bashy in nature. But all good - we stop for 2nd lunch and start thinking about the pace of our progress. Topo shows us bang in the middle of the Silverpeaks. Still a way to go, then. Onwards. By now, the sun is beating down, and the bush is now below head-height. It's hot

going. Spare hats are shared around. How much longer before we meet Rocky Ridge? We know we need to navigate around the rocky outcrop known (to us) as 'Mt Mirage' (not shown on Topo - does it even exist?) and it never seems to get any closer. But those views ... It's all worthwhile. We stop again, we're in full sun now. Water supplies are getting a little low. We momentarily lose the track. Is there even a track? Anyone faltering has to deal with the threat of my singing - that usually does the trick to motivate those fading, to find the energy they need to push on. Steffan bashes boldly through the tussocks and flaxes to emerge triumphantly on Rocky Ridge. Phew! Water supplies, energy bars, bananas, sweets and nuts are shared around to ensure everybody has a chance to make it home. Jenny finally found a taker for the emergency Kendal Mint Cake she's been carrying around since her arrival in NZ.

We politely declined the opportunity to visit the Hermits Cave itself. It will be there another (not so hot!) day. It's nearly 4pm and we still have a little way to go! But what glorious scenery we are in. I'm just soaking it all in. And now the going is very easy - we skip along through the thigh-high vegetation - this is easy. And the lighting is gorgeous. And wait until we get to the Super Highway track from Pulpit Rock. From there on, it's heads-down, we're going home. Our feet know the way, we pause briefly at the Green Hut site to refuel for the final push. And then it's 7pm and we are back at the cars! What an awesome mission.

Thanks to Rob for leading a fantastic trip on a great track/route. It's definitely one we need to repeat to keep this track alive - it's simply too good to let become over grown.

Helen Emerson, for Rob Seeley, Jeroen Hoexum, Steffan Rolfe, Jenny Forrest, Holly Yang, Joshua Brunt

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### **Thursday Evening speakers and events.**

A round-up of the people who have come to talk to us at our Thursday meetings and some of the more usual events. The intention here is to create a lasting record of the always-interesting and sometimes superb speakers we attract (thanks to our social secretaries) at our weekly meetings.

Oct 10. Food planning for Tramping. A lively exchange of ideas on good stuff to take to eat in the wilderness, what wild foods exist and how to gather/catch it.

Oct 17. Michelle Anderson spoke about her trekking experience in Norway. We were treated to a fine presentation of her adventures in, mostly, Jotunheimen national park.

Oct 24. Roger Leslie gave a colourful account of his epic walk the length of SH1 in 2021 to raise awareness of mental health.

Nov 21 OTMC's Gordon Tocher presented a slide-show of his exploration of rural Western Australia around Perth. This included the pinnacles desert and giant fantasy figures sprinkled along the coast.

Nov 28. Brendan Penwarden (OTMC member) gave a talk on his work with the local cliff rescue unit. We were treated to a simulation of a rescue in the club rooms featuring the extensive and specialised gear the unit uses.

Dec 12. OTMC BBQ. Finally good weather blessed this event in Woodhaugh gardens. Well attended by good range of ages.

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Many thanks to the people who contributed to this Bulletin! All contributions, text and photos, for future publications please to the editor: Rob Seeley :

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