



# WHAM! NEWS

*September 2009*

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## Introduction

Welcome to the September 2009 edition of WHAM!NEWS.

As you can see, there are 12 test passes to report since the last newsletter, an excellent achievement. We have now got most of our recruits from last year's recruitment days at Hereford and Worcester and are currently planning 2010's events.

The Committee welcomes our latest member, Barbara Dalloway, who is taking over as Group Secretary. Thanks go to Jonathan Richards for his efforts over the last year, he is stepping down from the committee but will still remain a member of the group.

As you can see opposite, our Chairman has been busy changing his bike again. I have also given in to temptation and a Honda CB1300 has replaced my Hayabusa. A complete change then but so far I am not disappointed, who cares if it ages me by 10 years, it looks great!



Elsewhere in this issue you will find The regular contributions from our Chairman & Chief Observer along with an article on the recent Castle Coombe trackday attended by Derek before he sold the K1300S. Also, Dennis provides amusement with his write up of a commute to Birmingham.

Don't forget that the clocks go back on the 25th of October and our Sunday rides start at 09:30. Hope to see you at one of our Natter Nights or at McDonalds one Sunday morning.

*Cover photo note... Last month I published a cruel picture of John Nixon fast asleep at the slow riding day, this is what he looks like when he is awake!*

## Successes

A record for WHAM, 12 Advanced test passes since the last newsletter. Well done to all, Associates & Observers.

### Advanced Test passes:

Derek Case - Observer: Phil George  
Ray Hayes - Observer: Tim Wynn  
Andrew Wibmer - Observer: Guy Butcher  
Mac Gasking - Observer: Eric Reynolds  
Paddy Tyson - Observer: Guy Butcher  
Andy Heighton - Observer: John Hodges  
Dudley Flower - Observer: James Dickson  
Adam Roy - Observer: Eric Reynolds  
John Round - Observer: Guy Jenkins  
Brian Morgan - Observer: John Hodges  
Lynton Jaynes - Observer: Tony Davis  
Ian Grimsley - Observer: John Nixon



**Andy Heighton**



**Brian Morgan**



**John Round**



**Ray Hayes**

## Chairman's Note

I have a confession to make; only six months after taking delivery of the K1300S and its gone!

Steve Edwards asked me a little while ago "where do you go after 175 hp?" Well let's see: there's the new BMW S100RR; that allegedly has 196 hp, then there's the new Honda V4 reckoned to be 200 hp! But is more always better? You'll remember I recently bought a little 650 single; that has a puny 50 hp but its lack of power is accompanied by a huge reduction in weight, fabulous handling and (for me) a much more comfortable seating position – even if some of you refer to it as the "knife seat"!

Back in September I had a long weekend with some friends up on the North York Moors. There were 8 bikes, ranging from the 1300 cc hyperbikes like my "S" to a 650 Versys. A number of people said that I didn't look comfortable on the "S" and I had to agree I was not. So they started it! When I returned I started testing bikes again but always something with a more upright seating position. Tony and I took some very good friends on an outing to Wales and I had the whole day on their machines - an R1200GS and a Versys. I was amazed at how capable the 650 twin Versys was – even when I was solo on the big GS and the Versys was two-up behind me it kept up (I must be getting slow!).

I have a KTM dealer close by and have dabbled with the RC8 in the past, but this time it was the SM-T a litre V-twin. This is the touring version of the mapcap Supermoto with laughably small panniers and an excuse for a windscreen. Raw power is probably a good description for this bike, huge fun in the first 30 minutes but then it turns to insistently wearing – so no good for my usage profile. The Versys was good but I admit to being anxious that it might not be able to cope well with the touring runs I hope to be doing. My BMW dealer, who must have a very good nose for a sale, dropped me a note about the great deals they were doing for September registrations. So, with the firm resolve "I'm not having a GS", I set off to try suitable bikes in the range. I tried the K1300GT and R1200RT both very good bikes but they didn't do it for me, after the 1200 it felt like going back. "No, I don't want to ride the R1200GS, I'm not having one!". Salesmen always have to deal with customers who don't know what they want and Steve persisted with the "F" range of middle-weights. These are all based on a Rotax parallel



twin engine. The "S" was not a possible – seating too prone. The ST was just totally boring and then the last in the range is a GS. "A WHAT?! Steve responded evenly with "It's similar to your G650 seating but with much more oomph, good handling, real off-road capability and serious touring capability – you'll like it". He was right and closed the sale.

The bike is 250 miles old as I write this and I'm amazed how quickly I've settled with it. It handles very nicely, despite the 21 inch front wheel (no doubt very important off-road ) and there certainly seems to be plenty of torque for our sort of road use. Like most GSers I'm sure I'll not be making much use of the off-road capability.

Looking at our latest membership list recently I was both surprised and pleased to see that we have around 100 members in WHAM. Our two recruitment events early in the year were spectacularly successful in bringing new members to the Club so you'll be pleased to know we plan to repeat the formula next year. These days are very much what we're about; showing that with "our way" it is possible to enjoy motorcycling more and ride safely. To put these events on we rely on WHAM Observers and members being available to help on the day; want to be involved? Let Steve Edwards know if you might be able to help in April next year.

Like all the Club Officers I'm standing for election in 2010. I've informed the Committee I will not stand after that. We will be seeking to appoint a Vice Chairman in 2010 with a view to that person taking over as Chairman in 2011.

Derek



BMW 800GS

## Chief Observer's Column..

### Overtaking – Part 1

I thought a mini series of articles on the subject of overtaking might be a good idea, this first one being a general scene-setter.

Overtaking is possibly the most dangerous manoeuvre we carry out as advanced motorcyclists, particularly when it is not executed properly. But why should this be so? I know from my own experiences that if I am on a particularly favourable piece of road and I come up behind another vehicle that doesn't seem to be making good progress, I can feel a sense of urgency to get past it. So this then increases the chances of a risk being taken, and it is when risk is introduced to the equation that things can start to go wrong. So the first thing we must recognise is that safe overtaking is about taking safe opportunities, not risks.

Good consistent application of The System will enable you to carry out the manoeuvre safely and efficiently. One of the statements used to define The System is 'leaves nothing to chance', and if you remember this key phrase it may help you eliminate risk from your future overtakes. If you can't clearly see the road ahead of you – and therefore can't see if there is oncoming traffic or hidden junctions, lay-bys, etc. – then it seems obvious that you should not be contemplating overtaking until you CAN see whether those dangers are present. If the road ahead has a bend in it, or even just a slight kink, then the closer you get to it the more danger there is that something could appear whilst you are in mid-manoeuve. So unless you have a good amount of road BEFORE that bend, do not risk your life by committing to overtaking. I always use the thought: 'if a Fireblade doing 100mph suddenly appeared, would I have time to regain the nearside?', and if the answer is NO, then I definitely shouldn't go for it! Try this thought next time you are out and considering overtaking, as it really brings the point home.

In the next part of this series I'll discuss some techniques that you can employ to help make your overtaking quicker, and more importantly, SAFER.

### Double white lines

As a follow up to my short 'Food for thought' article in the last issue, I thought I'd clarify what the Highway Code ac-

tually says about crossing that white line we all know and love. Rule 129 states:

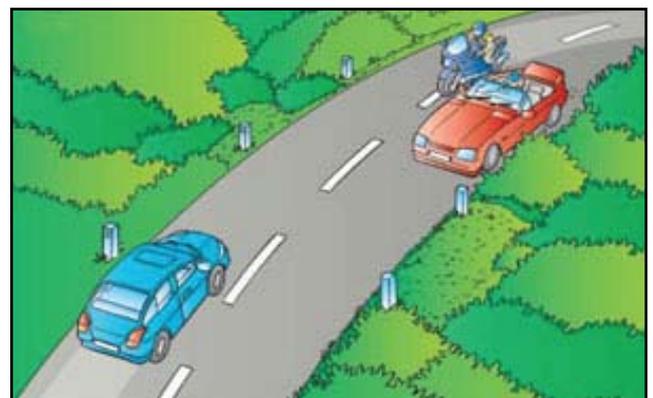
"Double white lines where the line nearest you is solid. This means you MUST NOT cross or straddle it unless it is safe and you need to enter adjoining premises or a side road. You may cross the line if necessary, provided the road is clear, to pass a stationary vehicle, or overtake a pedal cycle, horse or road maintenance vehicle, if they are travelling at 10mph or less."

The most common response when asked what a solid white line represents is 'no overtaking'. However, it can be seen that this is a generalisation that isn't accurate. In fact, when the gap between the vehicle in front and the solid white line is big enough, we motorcyclists can often overtake any class of vehicle provided it is safe, we do not inconvenience anyone, and we do not cross or straddle the line.

Moreover, the rule clearly states that you might legally cross the line to overtake one of three classes of moving vehicle, albeit when they are travelling at or less than 10mph. Horses and road maintenance vehicles generally easily fulfil the speed clause. But cyclists can often be travelling at 20-30mph, so be careful. Further, a 'road maintenance vehicle' doesn't refer to any slow moving contraption you find holding you up. It should be clearly marked, have an amber flashing light, and will often show a Keep Right arrow at the back for good measure.

And what about a stationary vehicle? It's important to make the distinction here between vehicles that are stopped at the side of the road and those stopped because they are in a queue of traffic. The rule refers to the first scenario, not the second. But... that was discussed in the last two articles. Have another look at them if you're now scratching your head about whether you should be filtering past that queue of stationary vehicles!

Tim





## Dennis's Pages...

Dennis Osborne has contributed some interesting thoughts on our vulnerability from car drivers and the story of a very amusing trip to Birmingham this month.

Looks sensible in the pic doesn't he? We can all succumb to a challenge, at least he stayed legal and safe!



### "SORRY, DIDN'T SEE YOU MATE!"

These are the words that I hope never to say. All of us as car drivers and motorcyclists would hate to have to say this having knocked a fellow biker off while driving our car during the day job.

Interestingly, the other evening, watching nothing in particular on the telly (my brain was resting!), I happened upon a program about magicians and how they distract your attention while doing the "trick". It showed an experiment done on a "Joe Bloggs" during research at a university by some boffins. They interestingly concluded that when you scan another object, your brain switches off for a very, very brief time and during that milli-second the brain is "off", other objects in the overall picture could be made to disappear (the magician relies on this).

Poor "Joe Bloggs" did not register the change that happened in the "brain off" period and actually accepted there was no difference between the start and finish of the experiment until it was pointed out to him!

It made me think that when someone says "Sorry, didn't see you mate" then maybe, just maybe they *did not* see you!

Perhaps drivers scanning the road for approaching hazards can fail to notice a moving small object (bikes) when they are distracted by another larger (potentially more dangerous to them) object. Maybe, just maybe they didn't actually see you even though the driver was looking directly at you. To them you actually are not there, although you are there. If you know what I mean!

Food for thought?

Dennis.

### Should I buy a push bike?



I was not looking forward to it, but I had to go into Birmingham at 8:30 am on a Tuesday morning. The weather was OK, it just had to be a bike job. Down the back lanes and a good run around junction 4 saw me heading up the A38 towards Longbridge, with fond memories of my apprenticeship at "Austins" in the '60s. Passing the works, now flattened (something the Germans couldn't do), my reminiscing was distracted by a cyclist. I was overtaken by "cycle man"! I was stopped at the lights - he didn't.

Further down the road I passed him only to have to stop at more lights. 'He can't do that' I thought as "cycle man" went up the pavement, around a few kids on their way to school, missed the lights then out and back onto the A38. Now "motorcycle man" (me) thought "cheeky b...r". Yet again up the hill to Northfield I overtook him - 'yes! got him, Motorbike Man leads!' This was now getting personal and he was annoying me (he was younger)! Through Northfield the first lights were in my favour - 'yes got him again', and laughed out loud in my helmet.

Then in the distance I could see more lights about to change against me. Worse still I could see cycle man in my mirror, well back. God, this guy is going for it. Lights went to red but I didn't panic. 'Keep it calm there's a nice gap up the middle to filter to the front - should have him here,' the lights change just as I hit the front - perfect filter and cycle man is still in my mirrors. 'Got the b....d'

Now I've a good run to Selly Oak and he won't see me for dust. With not too much traffic in front, a big gap behind and cycle man out of sight I'm feeling cocky. Then, some 200 yards in front a pedestrian (zombie), who can't cross a road unless told to do so by a green light, is pushing the button on the crossing. 'Why can't he cross without a green light?' There's 200 yards be-





tween me and him and I'm muttering - 'please don't change please god don't change, please, please. I'll even give more to charity but don't change.' A hundred yards further and the lights are still in my favour - but you just know it don't you! Fifty yards - still OK, then sod it! Pedestrian who's been programmed by Big Brother has got me! Slowing it nicely right down so I don't have to stop and looking in the mirrors for cycle man I find myself shouting 'come on then change, I can't ride any slower, change, please change'. Just as they change three students from the local college (who haven't yet been programmed) rush the lights and I have to stop along with every body else! Good news though - I can't see cycle man!

Quickly away and up the hill to Selly Oak and I can see him about 250 yards back (he's good & I hate him). I reckon the hill will slow him. Breathing relief, I give it a bit of extra throttle once past the speed camera and remind myself this is not a race and not personal.

Selly Oak has stopped, and I hit Oak Tree lights just as they're going red, breathing in, I filter to the front of the queue between a Ford KA on my left & Transit van on my right. Bit tight with the panniers, a filter I would not normally recommend but this is a race and cycle man will be along soon. However the view into the Ka reveals a very attractive young lady - thank god mini skirts are back. View to the transit shows a guy at the wheel who is asleep and has not seen me. Scan back to the Ka and try & make eye contact - yes - bit of a wave to say thank you and I wish I was 30 years younger, I ease forward to try and make transit driver see me -no- his lights are on but no one is home.

Then s\*?t - reality - I've just seen cycle man go down the bus lane, cross over the footpath, back into the bus lane, and I'm still stopped! Lights change and I'm off, luck holds, the next lights are with me and the traffic is moving OK. Swapping and picking the lanes I know that if I keep moving, I'm doing OK. Nothing coming towards me, so slowly, slowly down the outside - squeeze in as the No. 62 bus bears down on me from the opposite direction. I glimpse cycle man' 100 yards in front and I'm thinking 'slowly, slowly, catchy monkey'. Past the university and I can see him in front heading for the city. I smile again - I know I'll have him along here - 40 limit and even he can't do that. I sailed past at least 25 mph faster to show him why I need 160bhp.

The Priory lights are against me "b....r"- It's too tight for filtering. Should have left panniers off & used the rucksack! I'm looking in the mirrors for him (no mini skirts here) and then whoosh straight up the bus lane he's weaving between traffic and he's gone but the lights are still red! I cannot believe it. He's going to win!! We're off and within 300 yards I've got him in my sights again and slip past him. By the time we get to Bristol Street he's about 100 yards behind- Hiss! Spit! Boo! The lights

are changing as I approach - I cannot believe my bad luck. Picking my gap and I can filter straight to the front. I see cycle man crossing the road using the foot-path system - now that's just not fair!

I have to turn left soon and I'm determined not to be behind him at the finish line (sorry, repeat, this is not a race). Bit of eye contact with the car on the right and I'm safe with the truck on my left. Lights change and a bit of controlled acceleration off the lights and I can see him and his little legs whizzing round. I'm thinking 'I bet he's not really, really fit'. When I was 15 (he looked 25) I could have blown him away on my Claud Bulter with Campo gears - He's too young to have had the thrill of hanging on to the pole of a No 11 outer circle on the way to school while the conductor shouted he'd report you to the "Beak" - (memories... .).

400yds from the Queensway I passed him slowly and give him a wave, he smiles and waves back as I turned left and cut him up.

I hadn't gone above 40 (maybe a little) but it had been fun and best of all I'd won!

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Apart from being very amusing, Den's story highlights one of the best reasons for riding a motorcycle, the ability to filter through heavy traffic, turning a morning rush hour slog into a satisfying and enjoyable experience. Just remember to keep things within safe limits. The Law is not always clear regarding filtering and many motorcyclists are judged to be at least partly to blame when accidents do happen. Some sound advice from WHAM's Natter Night guest last month, Dave Jones is worth remembering:

- Search for reasons why filtering CANNOT be done, not vice-versa.
- Watch every vehicle about to be overtaken for any suspicious movements.
- Use headlights, (consider main beam).
- React immediately to anything that appears unusual.
- LOOK FOR SPACES - Spaces develop for a reason, check for emerging vehicles, drivers trying to U turn etc. **Spaces are dangerous!**

Tony.



## IAM Member benefits



IAM Membership is not just about displaying your sticker and feeling smug, there are some real financial benefits too.

The organisation has been working hard to negotiate discounts on many motoring related products and services. I have personally saved £25 on my AA membership this year just by quoting my IAM membership number when renewing, I also use IAM surety to insure both my bikes, they have so far proved very good value and are even quoting good competitive prices after 3 years with them, so no need to swap & change insurers to keep the premiums down.

Check out the private member's area of the IAM website for full details on current offers here:

<http://www.iam.org.uk/iammembers/>

Login using your IAM Membership number as the username and your surname as the password.

Tony

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## September Natter night - Dave Jones

WHAM's speaker for our September Natter night was Dave Jones, author of "Not the Blue book". Dave did presentation for us on Advanced Motorcycling. He showed some great slides that stepped through a short ride down a stretch of rural road pointing out the various hazards along the way, followed by some fascinating video footage from his experiences as a Motorcycle Policeman on the UK's roads.

We had a great turn out for this, including some members from other groups, a big thanks goes out to Tim Hutt for organising the night and to Dave and his assistant for a very entertaining and informative evening.

## 50 limits again.



I return to my old hobby horse this issue, inappropriate 50mph speed limits. They are still creeping in, particularly in Warwickshire where it seems that any road that is or ever has been considered a decent motorcycling road is now restricted to 50mph.

I signed a government petition recently (along with many others from our group) protesting against a blanket 50mph limit. Here's the response from no. 10:

### THE PETITION

"Following the announcement that the government is planning to reduce the national speed limit to 50 miles per hour, we the undersigned oppose this, since it will make no difference to road deaths and the cut in carbon emissions is so insignificantly small it's laughable."

### THE RESPONSE

The Government is not proposing to reduce the national speed limit.

On 21st April the Government published a consultation on the new road safety strategy: A Safer Way: Consultation on Making Britain's roads the Safest in the World, which closed on 14 July. It sought views on the vision, targets and measures for improving road safety in Great Britain in the period from 2010.

Regarding single carriageway roads where the national speed limit applies, the Government propose to revise our existing guidance to highway authorities, recommending that lower limits are adopted where risks are relatively high and there is evidence that a lower limit would reduce casualties.

The Government believes that this targeted approach is the best way to ensure that speed limits are set at the appropriate level for each road.

The Government will announce the results of the consultation at the end of the year.



## A real trackday

In mid-September, I was invited to spend the day with Motorcycle Folly at the Castle Combe circuit in Wiltshire. Motorcycle Folly is a not-for-profit company which has been organising track days for some 20 years – and the experience shows!

My previous track days have been limited to the IAM days at Mallory Park. I have never ventured out on a “proper” trackday as I’m very reserved about whom I will ride with on the road, let alone a track. The prospect of finding myself on a closed circuit with just the sort of rider I’d rather avoid has previously kept me away from trackday events. I was enticed into this by Steve and Barb Dalloway, who are regular participants at Folly events, and, as it turns out, Officers of the Motorcycle Folly.

Rather like the IAM days I was told to be at the 0840 briefing – an essential pre-requisite for anyone going on the track. As I turned up in good time I had the opportunity to have the bike noise tested. Castle Combe has a bit of a reputation for being tough on noise; the limit is 105 dBA. Unlike the road limit which is at 4000rpm Castle Combe require the bike at 2/3rd of its red-line so fancy exhaust butterflies to pass the road test are of no use at Castle Combe! I was just a bit anxious as to whether the K1300 would pass as I know it has a bit of a rasp when its opened up. No problem for me coming in at 103 dBA. Some current-model Fireblade and GSXR owners were very put out as their bikes could not pass – even with standard road-legal pipes! This problem is well known to Castle Combe staff and the Folly who make it perfectly clear in advance of the event that these bikes will not pass. One poor GSXR owner came with after-market cans; having failed the test he went home (to Bristol) to fit the standard pipes and returned to have those failed too! Galling for him but also for the Folly staff who made it clear before the event that the GSXR would not pass.

By the time I’d completed the noise test the paddock was starting to fill up with all sorts of machinery. A large



sprinkling of dedicated trackday bikes in all shapes and sizes, including a 250cc Aprilia, two-stroke. Inevitably there several Ducatis – including some very professional looking guys - even with tyre-warmers! Fortunately for me there seemed to be several roadbikes too – though it was a bit disconcerting to see some owners set about their bikes removing mirrors and number-plates (do they realise there are no speed cameras?).

Back to the briefing: it came in two parts; the first session for everyone, the second for those new to track events, as a newbie I sat in on both parts. The circuit was explained in some detail, including procedures for joining/leaving and the marshals' signals to control circulation. The circuit had been laid out with coloured cones at each bend to represent a typical turn-in point, the bend apex, and exit point. These, I later found, were particularly useful since the circuit is fairly flat, featureless and has large run-off areas. The "newbie" briefing was very well done; it covered similar ground but emphasised the safety procedures and provided the opportunity for less confident riders to ask their questions without boring the experienced riders.

The track time was available in 15 minute slots and the riders were divided into 4 groups (Expert, Fast Intermediate, Intermediate and Novice) so each hour on the hour I was on the track! For the first session a Folly Marshall leads the riders around the track for three laps of familiarisation after which we are "waved-on" and allowed to make safe overtakes. In subsequent sessions we are allowed out "on our own" from the start of the session. In all sessions there are Folly marshals out on the track to watch what's happening and any aggressive or otherwise dangerous behaviour results in the offending biker having at least a stern talking to or possibly being asked to leave.

The Folly bill themselves as organisers of "the gentlemen's trackday"; I did see a couple of lasses out on their bikes so take the reference as being applicable to both sexes. I was impressed. The segregation of different abilities on the track helped enormously, so too did Castle Combe's insistence on only twelve bikes on the track at any one time. If I wanted the track to myself it was easy to lose the others (by slowing down of course!) and then feeling comfortable that there was no one likely to dive inside me on a turn. On other sessions feeling more adventurous I went out last and gradually climbed up through the pack.

Instructors are on hand and it is simply a matter of asking for advice – no charge. The instructor will do as you ask. "Demonstration laps, no problem". "Follow you and tell you where you're going wrong, no problem". "You can't get your knee down on the pit curve over 140 mph ... get a life"!

The weather smiled on us and so traction was good. There were only two accidents on the day but with Castle Combe's wide run-off areas the only damage was scuffed bikes and scuffed leathers. One of the points laboured in the safety briefings was the importance of warming up the tyres in each session before trying too hard on the Rossi impressions. It is significant to me that both accidents were very soon after the commencement of a session. Personally I took two laps at a good pace but with some deliberate heavy braking before each corner to warm the tyres and keep me a respectful distance from the tarmac. As most other novice riders would pull away from me during my "warm-up" laps this policy also provided some entertainment in playing "catch up" for the rest of the session.

In summary it was a splendid day, very well organised and controlled by Motorcycle Folly. The Castle Combe circuit and facilities were excellent. Both are highly recommended to anyone interested in trackdays or simply wanting to test out their bike handling skills in a safe environment.

Thank-you Motorcycle Folly. - Derek





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## WHAM! Christmas Dinner Menu 2009

WHAM are holding their annual Xmas dinner at the Falcon again this year on Friday 11th December.  
Dinner is in the Ballroom and starts at 7:30pm for 8:00.

Please email our Secretary Barbara Dalloway (whamsec@hotmail.co.uk) if you are coming and let her know your menu choice from below.

### MERRY CHRISTMAS

*Three courses and coffee £15.95*

*To Start*

*Winter vegetable soup with herby croutons*

*Game terrine with red onion confit*

*Fan of melon with parma ham and exotic fruit dressing*

*Main Course*

*Local turkey with sage stuffing and a baby sausage*

*Roast lamb with apricot stuffing*

*Steamed salmon with spring onion risotto*

*Penne pasta with parmesan sauce, sautéed garlic mushrooms*

*For Dessert*

*Christmas pudding and brandy sauce*

*White chocolate, home-made ginger\* ice cream with poached plums*

*(\*vanilla available as an option)*

*Apple and cranberry crumble with custard*

*Cheese plate with apple and grapes*

*Coffee*





## Your WHAM! Committee



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