



HARROW CINE & VIDEO SOCIETY

www.harrowcinevideo.org.uk

NEWS AND VIEWS

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NOVEMBER 2012

**A Merry Christmas and a
Prosperous New Year to all our
Members and Friends**

In Memory of Heather Lee

by Alan Morgan

As Treasurer I had an unusual task at a Committee meeting. For the first time in a year or two, we had a significant increase in our funds as we have received a relatively large donation.

All the longer term members will have a lot of memories of our previous Secretary, Heather Lee who was with the Society for 17 years. From making videos in pre computer days with two VCRs, when editing was a real skill, organising the young film makers Peter Kittel Competition and then facing cancer, Heather was wholly involved in our Society. A number of members will remember the large turn out for her funeral in 2009, we virtually had a 24 member Society meeting at St John the Baptist in Greenhill, Harrow.

Now out of the blue and completely unexpectedly I was notified by our bank that a direct payment of £1,187.49 had been

deposited in memory and celebration of the life of Heather Lee.

Having just spent monies on our latest equipment to complete our step up to HD standards, we were more than surprised to receive such a large donation and we have been pleased to write to the donor, Heather's godson, expressing our gratitude to both him and Heather's sister. We have had the further news that his employer BP has a fund matching scheme for Charity donations, which means that we may expect an extra sum in a similar amount at the end of the year.



We have had a number of Grants over the years but I believe that this is the first donation effectively from a member's estate ever received, what a great and pleasant surprise!

From the Programme Secretary

Dear Members,

You will all I am sure realise it takes a lot of time and work in advance to assemble an entire programme for the year. Fortunately I have been able once again to get one completed and trust it will prove to be as successful as last years.

On looking at the programme you will see I've tried to make every Monday evening one of interest to encourage members to attend regularly.

Getting outside speakers along is difficult as many of those contacted feel it's not practical to travel any distance just for a couple of hours with a set programme and be expected in addition to answer technical questions in detail in the limited time available.

As you are all aware in the past a number of our members have been involved in the film industry. Some of these members have offered to help by taking evenings and it is with their technical knowledge, experience and advice that enables us to further improve our productions and makes our hobby even more interesting.

Included also in the programme are some Showreels from other clubs and these also help us to judge our standard of filmmaking.

Finally I would like to say it is only by your weekly support that I can estimate the results of my efforts at creating the programme.

Norman

CHANGE OF PUBLICITY OFFICER

After more years in office than he cares to admit, Aivar Kaulins has resigned as our publicity officer, feeling that perhaps radical new ideas were required for the future prosperity of the Society. He will continue to serve on the committee as a consultant, as well as being responsible for sales of cine related equipment donated to the club, a most useful regular supplement to our finances.

The appointment has been filled by one of our younger members, Céline Terranova, with boundless enthusiasm for promoting the Society. We wish her well!

Haywards Heath Movie Makers "Movie Showcase 2011"

By Tommy Kovacs

The 2012/2013 session began as we intended to carry on.... with a bang. Our friends from Hayward Heath provided us with an outstanding set of their videos to learn from and entertain us.

The first thing that impressed us was the short introductory sequence. It was interesting, creative and original. However, the Rank Organisation may object to using their music. It was followed by David Fenn's video, **Ideal Home Comes to Sussex**. He made an interesting black and white newsreel type story recalling a 50s like atmosphere. Some speeded up sequences captured movement in time. Making the video as if it were an old film made the production more interesting. The clear diction of the

50s style commentary added a great deal to its virtual authenticity.

This was followed by Rod Willerton's four and a half minute video, **The Unsinkable Titanic**. This film largely consists of black and white contemporary still photos and film clips showing the construction of this famous ship. To introduce movement to the otherwise static pictures Rod animated the stills. The pictures were nearly all well known from several previous television broadcasts. The commentary was instructive and the voice was steady, supported by clear pronunciation.

Tony Pethers' Italian story, **Transport Venetian Style** was an interesting effort to show how to manage transport when the roads are canals. Venice offers infinite

opportunity to produce unique videos but it would certainly require a lot of local research to find suitable subjects not yet hackneyed to death. However, an Interesting video that would require a little more explanation. For example, that metal skull needs some description. The ambient sound was fitting the steady camera work. Care however, must be taken in maintaining steady and continuous level of sound. It is often the case that the endings of videos are too abrupt due to lack of foresight in planning the project.

Peter Wadsworth's short winter video, **White Rabbit** is a story of two people building a "snowman". Interesting video with a good variety of winter scenes. The music beautifully fits the story even if some distortion in the sound occurs. It is a nice touch to keep cutting back to the progress of construction that ends up to be a white rabbit. All in all, a nice video.

Someone Cares is a 3 minutes story video from Rod Willerton. It is about an elderly gentleman seemingly living on his own in a house that has seen better days. Nobody comes, nobody writes to him but suddenly a letter arrives. You guessed it. It is from the Inland Revenue. Nice idea, well constructed.

Petra was one of the most enjoyable videos of the evening, made by Richard Mercer. Despite of the popularity of this ancient Jordanian monument, the narrative was full of interesting facts (perhaps a little too much) and spoken in clear diction. The video showed some not so obvious aspects of the site together with information on the Nabatian history. The photography was excellent. The video could have been improved by applying colour correction to match some of the scenes. The otherwise excellent video would have also benefited from having opening shots leading into Petra.

Ken Finch's video, **Charming** is about team work surveying the health of the area by examining the number of earth worms in a given area. Interesting concept that by simulating the noise the mole makes it drives the worms to the surface. Good to know. Very entertaining and quirky video and we are not sure if the subject is actually true or it is a spoof.

The sound could be improved but otherwise it is quite an interesting video. This video **Boom and Bust** is an excellently constructed documentary video. Roy Langley treated the subject with a creative twist. Everybody knows Brighton in Sussex and its history but hardly anybody knows about the old gold mining town Brighton in New Zealand. Brighton in New Zealand is now a ghost town as the gold ran out and so did the miners. Very nice, interesting commentary backed up by steady camera work. The video was further improved by the well chosen music that supported the action. probably the best video of the evening.

Polly Gone by Rod Willerton is one of those 1 minute videos that appeals to lovers of animation. those who tried their hands at animation know that even a one minute story involves very many patient hours of work with the camera and computer. The only problem appeared to be with the voiceover.

The last video of the evening was by Barry Mack to celebrate a cycle tour for pensioners. A video for promoting cycling. To set up the mood, **Cycle Touring for Pensioners** began with a creative use of green screen technique showing the touring party as part of the Tour de France race. The story telling was pretty comprehensive showing all the major parts of the route from Portsmouth into France. The video contained some nice sea shots and pretty views over Normandy. Commentary was instructive, interesting and well spoken. Some shots were however, a little too quick. Also, the production of voiceover needs to be made in a room with some curtains and soft furnishing. Unfortunately walls produce a kind of hard echoing sound that was audible in this otherwise excellent travelogue.

This last video completed the evening. The lively discussion that followed each production has taken quite a bit of time away from showing the complete 82 minutes programme.

Technical Comments from Jim Gatt:-
The Main Menu has two buttons: "Play Movie" and "Scene Selection". When the "Play Movie" button is activated the entire disc contents are played as expected.

When the "Scene Selection" button is activated a selection menu appears with access to the first six items with the rest of the items available on a further two menus. Button navigation could be improved by including links between the third and fourth buttons on the selection menus. On the third selection menu the "Next" button had been deleted whereas it could have been set to return to the Main Menu.

All the items were contained on only one timeline which meant that activating the button for the first item had effectively the same effect as activating the "Play Movie" button. The disc could have been configured with individual timelines linked so that activating the "Play Movie" button would play all the separate timelines in sequence whilst activating a

button on one of the selection menus would cause the relative timeline to play and then return to the menu for the next selection to be made. This alternative configuration would, of course, be at the discretion of the disc creator. General packaging of the disc was of a very high standard but a choice of more contrasting colours could improve legibility. This was especially noticeable on the spine of the case and, to a lesser extent, on the disc itself.

Home produced DVDs are often regarded as a potentially unreliable medium but this disk played perfectly on various players.

It is hoped that the above comments will be regarded as helpful and will encourage the disc authors to greater success.

New Members and News of Previous Ones

by Alan Morgan

Hello to **Suzanne Sedgeman** who heard about us through an Art magazine and is interested in all aspects of movie making. She appears to be a beginner having a PC at the ready and will obviously have to talk to all of us to grasp the details of our hobby. No other special hobbies are declared so perhaps we can encourage Suzanne to make movies.

Hello also to **Ben Peirson** who has a Canon DSLR and PC but not as yet a camcorder. He would like to be more proficient in camera work and post production and he has previously shared video equipment. On moving to our area he has, in due course to re-equip himself and he will probably be most interested in hearing our members' experiences. He saw one of our posters in North Harrow library and thought he ought to check us out!

Apart from our big welcome we wish Suzanne and Ben many happy years with our Society and trust we can guide them so they can enjoy our common hobby in non-professional movie making.

With our best wishes we must record two previous members who cannot rejoin this year. **Muriel Hosking** is spending time in hospital and is not well enough to attend our meetings and **Mike O'Donnell** after 17 years, some on the Committee, finds it too difficult to continue his membership due to medical problems. We shall miss them both.

Our fourth new member this year was welcomed on 22 October. **Richard Lawrence** saw one of our activities at the Pinner Parish Church some time ago and decided he ought to investigate us! Our posters advertising the Autumn Movie Show prompted him, his mind was made up and he is now a member.

He has a Panasonic SD9 camcorder and PC with Sony Vegas programme and Adobe Elements. His main interest is recording events, family and locations - sounds like most of us! He would like to learn more on editing AVCHD, using the Vegas programme more efficiently and more about the addition of audio.

Having recently retired he seems eminently qualified to join our ranks and his other interests include IT in general, PC's and software applications.

We wish Richard every success in his movie endeavours and hope he enjoys our company for some time to come.

VASCO DA GAMA

by Norman Rogers

The majority of my activities over the past twenty-five years has been the production of travelogue style documentaries. An important feature of these travelogues is to provide information as to the location of where the action takes place. In the early days a route could be shown by displaying a map of the area and then crossfading to the map with the route showing. Although a technique which has its place today, the lack of movement was generally a limitation. With the introduction of programmes such as Canopus Imagine operating as a rostrum camera, pan and zoom became a reality. Most modern editing programs now provide this facility. Animation was virtually impossible.

And then came the most exciting programme—“**Vasco da Gama**” by Motion Studios.

What will it do?

The Pro version of the programme will accept a bitmap as a background. This can be anything, in my case it is normally a pre-prepared map. A route can now be plotted, each point along the route can be of two forms. The first is just a point that the route will pass. These points can be converted to a stop-over point, where control over the timing along the route is achieved. Other features

can be changed at these points, the colour of the route line and also the ‘header’. The header is the most fascinating facility, a range of 3D objects, cars, ships, trains, people, and inanimate objects which will lead the route. Still objects can be placed along the route, pictures of the location being an obvious choice.



The current version of Vasco da Gama allows tracking flight routes around a globe format.

Finally the project is rendered to provide a file to load to your editing program's timeline. Formats available include PAL or NTSC in Standard or High Definition.

To see what can be achieved with Vasco da Gama, I suggest a visit to Motion Studios website at:
www.motionstudios.de

Editor's note: The website referred to lists the cost of this programme as €99 for the basic version, €149 for the HD professional and €299 for the HD Ultimate version. Their maps also come out at an extra €69 each.

Writing a Script

by Wallace Jacobs



Here was a lecture close to everyone's heart. Anybody who has made a story film a documentary or a holiday film always wants to put a correct story to it.

Had we entrusted this very important talk to the right person? After all she is a fairly new member and we had only seen one film of hers (although very good). We all thought could we learn anything tonight?

Céline Terranova started very confidently; very soon we were all listening with complete attention to this very interesting talk. The cute French accent seemed to enhance it all.

Her presentation was very slick, a series of slides with multiple headings shown on the big screen. I cannot rewrite her lecture here but she very clearly showed us how to build the plot and how to write the dialogue. She uses a software package dedicated to writing scripts - Celtx - and demonstrated how much it helped in script-writing.

She emphasized that a film script was not a book, therefore do not write everything as if it was visual. The actors showed the emotion of the plot, and remember when writing a script to give commands for the actors and the Director, walk, run, stand still, stare etc.

Use a script as rising action. Ease the plot along; give the audience a chance to absorb the plot situations as it moves along.

Finally when you get to the last part of your story, - they live happily ever after or they don't, make it clear what it is.

If you want to write a script, remember the key points.

- 1 Start from a hero
- 2 Follow the narrative structure
- 3 Choose a theme for the story

Céline was most informative, and will be a great asset to the club for the future. Thank you for a great evening.

NTR Canal Cruise 22nd September 2012

A Report by Aivar Kaulins, FACI

On a brilliantly sunny Saturday morning, 35 club members and their partners turned up at the boatyard of Grebe Canal Cruises at Pitstone Wharf in Buckinghamshire for a North Thames Region canal cruise. The passengers were mainly members of five of our affiliated clubs. The largest contingent of ten was from Wanstead & Woodford, closely followed by nine from Harrow, with Potters Bar, Enfield and Finchley also represented.

Organised by Council member Penny Love, FACI, we had the "Chiltern Countess" as our home and transport for the next four hours, gliding peacefully along the Grand Union Canal at no more than walking pace.

Obviously this was an ideal opportunity for all movie makers, with cameras much in evidence for both video and stills photography. Passing through several locks, we could not only film the action of operating these locks, but also get off the boat and film the "Countess" under way, re-boarding at the next lock. All good fun!

Included in the price of the cruise was a packed hot lunch, which met us at one of the locks. The choice was either fish and chips or chicken and chips, with unlimited tea and coffee available throughout the trip. On board was a licensed bar for those needing stronger refreshment.

Once again our sincere thanks to Penny for organising the trip, much enjoyed by us all. Now, where shall we go next year?



Cruise organiser, Penny Lane with Alan Morgan



Ken Mills filming Club members boarding the Canal Boat



IAC NTR Chairman, Brenda Granshaw boarding the boat



Dave Smith, Lilian Barrett and Jean Smith with David Hughes in background



Ken Mills with camera



Anne Mills and Jean Smith



Aivar Kaulins and David Hughes



Ken Mills filming from canal towpath



Dave Smith on towpath

Photos by Aivar Kaulins

Aivar Kaulin's Earlier Films

Ben Peirson

On Monday 1st October 2012, film society members in attendance were treated to a selection of films made by Aivar Kaulins. Introducing the evening, he prompted the audience to ask themselves two questions: *how* and *why* were these films made?

The first video, **"Our Local Hero,"** explored the identity of a figure on a pub sign in Harrow Weald. The sign, now deceased, belonged to the pub *Leefe Robinson VC*, named after the first pilot in WW1 to shoot down a German airship over Britain.

The answer to the first *why* question was clear; you don't have to go very far in order to find the subject for an interesting film. In Aivar's own words, the subject can be within "spitting distance." For example, as another of the films would reveal, most people would be aware of the Walk of Fame in Hollywood, but few may be aware that there are similar walks outside the Odeon in Leicester square and even in Wembley Stadium.

"Running on time", another film derived from the local area, is a film about Harrow Model Railway Club. According to Aivar, it was quite hard to track down the slightly elusive organisation, but once it was infiltrated he came out with footage of its railway (which takes up several rooms including the toilet) and some of its members.

Here, I think, is another answer to the *why* question.

I think Aivar has an interest in models, and not only those "with two legs" (as

Aivar says). Another one of his films was about model aeroplanes, which he risked burning his head for on a particularly sunny day, filming them take to the sky at Duxford Imperial War Museum.

Then, **"The Monarch of Meccano"** took us into the world of Colin Davies, a retired engineer, who now spends his time making masterpieces out of Meccano!

I would also guess that Aivar has an interest in pubs. My favourite film of the night was one entitled **Tavern!**, which discussed different types of pub signs by referencing signs from the local area and beyond (this included the sign of Leefe Robinson VC!). What was of particular interest to me, however, was the explanation behind the local pub named "The Case is Altered", a name I have often puzzled over when drinking there myself. Here I found an answer to the *how* question.

I am not an expert in the technicalities of film making and so am not qualified to say how it was filmed in any technical sense. However, I can say that these films were made with a spirit of adventure and exploration. Often the topics were not put out on a plate, but required some digging; a little bit of detective work.

So, in short, you can make films in your local area, about things you are interested in, and you might go on a bit of an adventure in the process. Quite inspiring for a budding film maker...

An Evening With Bob Foley

by Geoff Foord



Bob Foley delivering his talk

At the meeting on Monday 22nd October we were given a great evening hosted by Bob Foley.

He told us he had 50 years' experience with the BBC obtaining the post of sound supervisor.

Whilst there he worked on "That Was The Week That Was", "Steptoe & Son", "Jazz 65" to name but a few. He had a short time away from the BBC where he was fortunate enough to work on the film "The Battle of Britain".

There were many anecdotes about this and we were shown a film he took on a Bolex standard 8 camera. This

was shot without the benefit of sound that we now take for granted. His skill & experience was very obvious when he showed us the film to which he added a sound track, without which the film would have still been good but this made it great. He had numerous 'hits' on You Tube with this. He gave us several examples of how sound effects were created such as stamping on a beer keg, snapping celery for the sound of breaking bones, stab sounds from stabbing a cabbage, straw sound from rustling old magnetic recording tape and crunching up cellophane for a crackling fire.

He advised us to build up a library of sounds adding one sound effect to another.

It was interesting watching his film of the job of a cinema projectionist, taking place in a small cinema, much more to it that I realised.

I am sure that all present enjoyed the evening as much as I did.

PROGRAMME REMINDER

Meetings of the Society are held in the Canons Room at the Harrow Arts Centre

DECEMBER 2012

- 3rd An evening with Alan Colegrave - "Let's talk about editing".
- 10th Christmas Celebrations

JANUARY 2013

- 7th "Elstree, Britain's Hollywood" - Talk by Bob Redman.
- 14th To be arranged following demise of the Borehamwood Club and the Joe Kay Competition.
- 21st Chairman's Shield Competition - Holiday / Family.

PINNER PLATE COMPETITION

Harrow Cine & Video Society v Potters Bar FilmMakers



Some of the audience for the Competition



The Judge, Mr John Luton delivering his comments and Verdict



John Luton presents the Pinner Plate to Tommy Kovacs, Chairman of the Harrow Cine & Video Society

The competition was held this year on 15th October at Harrow and we were very pleased to welcome a number of members from the Potters Bar Society. The Judge for this competition was Mr John Luton.

Each Society is required to present a programme of movies up to a maximum duration of forty minutes screen time. The winner is the Society which, in the Judge's opinion puts on the best programme.

Harrow put on a varied programme of six videos each by a different author.

Potters Bar also showed six videos, three of which were by the same author.

This slight difference seemed to tip the judgement of the evening in favour of Harrow as the Judge commented that although it was very difficult to differentiate between the quality of the entries by the Clubs, the fact that Harrow had a varied selection of authors as opposed to just three from Potters Bar tipped his judgement in favour of Harrow. He therefore awarded the Pinner Plate to Harrow this year.

Photos by Maurice Twelvvetrees

FILMING A DRAMA

By Ludwig levy

The recent summer break in our Club meetings, which I should have spent travelling the world and filming, was sadly spent mainly in hospital due to an operation on my spine.

While twisting and turning in my bed, the thought had struck me that here might be a subject for a drama to enter into one of the Club competitions. The sight of knives cutting into my back with blood gushing out of the wound might appeal to some of the audience.

There was one problem though. Neither the surgeon nor any of the other medical staff

were agreeable to hold the camcorder during the operation, while aiming it at my back with the blood pouring out, a sight which I felt, would be much appreciated by some of the people. No one was even agreeable to mounting the camcorder on a tripod. I don't think we are likely to find any future Club members amongst this staff!

So, sadly, I was not able to film this drama which might have appealed to some of the audience.

Well, never mind, better luck next time.

Reading Film & Video Society Showreel 2012

by Judy Long

On 29th October we were treated to a varied programme of 16 films made by 10 different members of the Reading FVS.

The first was a 2 minute, 40 year old film entitled **'Tortoises are Fun'** by Bernard Bareham. This consisted of speeded-up footage of tortoises, with an amusing commentary to match the action. It was considered an original idea, and although the film quality was dated, the concept stood up well to the test of time.

'Paperman' was a 2 minute modern animation by a new member of the club, Charity Gordon. This was very well received. The animation was good and it had a well thought-out story, with an animated paper cut-out figure, and a tremendous punchline. Professional animation software makes this type of film easier to make, but is unaffordable for most of us. A very enjoyable film.

'A Little Bit of Paris' was a 1 minute film by Ian McDougall, consisting of a variety of interesting shots, wide-angle and close-up, with different speeds, all accompanied by typical Parisian music. The end was rather abrupt, but we were left wanting more.

'That's What Friends Are For' was a 4 minute film, also by Ian McDougall. The footage perfectly matched the title song, being footage of a group of friends enjoying one another's company on a holiday trip together. The film was considered by some to be a holiday film with no interest to anyone other than the participants. Others thought it a feel-good film of shared experiences, with good, well shot and well edited shots perfectly matched to the song. Like his previous film it faded out rather abruptly with no end titles. **'4 Days in Oz'** by Laurie Joyce was a 12' 40" film of a short trip to the Melbourne and Cairns areas of Australia. There was a great variety of very steady, long and close-up shots, an informative and clear voice-over, and the film used ambient noise rather than music. The newsreel type ending was very effective.

'Nice by Night and Day' was footage of a carnival parade in the French town. The 7' film by Brian Hibbitt was colourful, interesting and well edited, with good footage by night and by day and typical carnival music.

After the break we saw **'Babies Bath Time'**, a 4' film by Brian Sargent of elephants being scrubbed. The film was considered rather too long for the content, and ended very abruptly, some time after the very appropriate music had finished.

'Endings', another Ian McDougall film was a 5'30 supposedly spooky story. It had good atmospheric music, and kept our attention to the end, but the ending was slightly anticlimactic and left most of us a little bemused.

Brian Hibbitt's second offering, the 4 minute **'QR Invaders'** was an informative piece about the new QR barcodes that take you directly to websites from your smartphone. He very nicely entertained us by using the Star Wars theme tune to a Space Invaders introduction, and probably taught a few of us something.

'Making of the Newbury Coat', a 3'40 offering from Tony Colville showed us an event demonstrating the making of a coat from shearing the sheep through all the weaving processes to the final garment. The commentary was informative, although the sound quality of the interviews wasn't great, and the film came to another abrupt end.

'Summer in La Toussuire' was the second film from Laurie Joyce, and was 5'30 montage of footage of time spent in the French Alps. There was a good variety of shots of scenery and activities, with wide-angle and close-ups. A nice film, with accompanying music.

This was followed by a 1' film from Peter Marsh, **'A Helping Hand'**. The little girl appeared lost, and her confusion was

nicely shot from her height; then we realised that she was actually looking for a blind man, who was really the vulnerable person in the film. A nice idea.

'Nimrod' was a 6'40 film, also by Peter Marsh. It was of a coach and horse driving event. There was plenty of informative commentary, but although there was some very nice footage it was felt that the film was commentary-driven and there wasn't enough variety of footage to sustain it. A little too long perhaps.

Next up was **'A Garden for Sharing'** an 11' film by new Reading member Anne Massey. We cut this off in mid-flow because we were running short of time, and it was felt that this was a film mainly of interest to those concerned with the garden.

'Instant Office Space' was an AV presentation by Jonathan Farmer. Using time-lapse it was shot over three days and showed the erection of an office block from a point-of-view across the road. 1'20 was just the right length for an effective film of this type.

Laurie Joyce's third film was the 6' **'Journey into Space'**. It had a very effective introduction and ending featuring Dan Dare and the Eagle comic, and was an interesting film about the Kennedy Space Centre. As with all his films, it was well shot and gave us plenty of information, particularly emphasising the enormous size of the site.

Overall it was felt that the first half of the programme was better than the second, but the sixteen films provoked some lively comments, and gave us a very enjoyable and informative evening.

Technical appraisal by Jim Gatt

Presentation of the disc was to a high standard, a printed disc in a case with an attractive insert.

The disc played well but the button navigation was a bit haphazard. When the disc loaded there was a menu with two rows of three buttons with another small button lower down to access a second similar menu, a common scenario. Unfortunately, the titles on the buttons were difficult to read on a small desk monitor. As one would expect, on loading, the first button on the first row was selected. Pressing the right button twice on the remote control selected the second and then third buttons. Pressing it again selected the button for the next menu. It would have been better if the first button on the second row had been selected.

After playing any timeline a return was made to the menu and the button for the timeline just played was selected. Selection of the button for the next timeline would have been more convenient.

Layout Design by Maurice Twelvetreets

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