



# CHANNEL Museum



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Museum – Research Room – Gallery – Camera Collection - Café

## Tour Groups

Andrew Tomes



***Bay Tours New Zealand visitors at the Museum***

The Channel Museum welcomed its first international tour group on the 1<sup>st</sup> March, with 29 visitors from the Hawke's Bay region of New Zealand. This group was touring Tasmania with Bay Tours New Zealand, for the company's first Tasmania tour. We were honoured that Bay Tours chose to include the Museum as part of their tour which included morning tea in the café and a guided tour of the Museum.

New South Wales based Aurora Coach Tours have again visited twice in February as part of their annual summer visit to Tasmania where they bring their coach over to Tasmania to conduct two 15-day tours. Feedback from their previous visits has been so positive that Aurora Coach Tours now include the Channel Museum every year in their itinerary.

Local Tour operator, Island Time Tours, offer personalised tours for small groups and include the Channel Museum as part of their D'entrecasteaux Channel day tour. They have several visits planned for autumn with their visitors coming from all over Australia.

Feedback from all these tours has been fantastic with many comments suggesting this is the best small museum they have visited in Australia and a credit to the volunteers.

## President's Report

Welcome to 2026 and hope you all survived the Christmas season well. I am always surprised at how quickly time flies as we look forward to Easter eggs and other chocolate goodies, not to mention Hot Cross Buns. Yum yum!!

The last 3 months have flown, and the new year has our volunteers up and running, ticking off the "to do" list. The archive room is almost ready to move in to, and we are all looking forward to bringing this area into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. An Art's grant enables us to purchase appropriate supplies such as boxes, paper etc. to protect our items during storage. The Curatorial team has been assessing and packing items for months now and eagerly await their move to the new facility.

We would like to extend our appreciation and gratitude to the Lions Club of Kingborough for their financial assistance for paint, and their members who prepared and painted the walls for us. These wonderful gentlemen have also offered to help assemble the shelving units as another project to help our progress. Thankyou, thankyou.

The new items in the Museum gift shop have generated appreciative interest and noted for their high quality and reasonable pricing. Please come in, have a look and help support our local artisans.

The school year has begun and our guides are keen to continue sharing their knowledge with these young minds.

The "Night at the Museum" speakers are booked in for some very interesting and entertaining topics. **Please remember**, if you have a topic or know of anyone who would like to offer a presentation, please contact Andy at [secretary@channelmuseum.org.au](mailto:secretary@channelmuseum.org.au).

We have accepted an invitation from the Children's University to be part of their "Limitless Learning Program" giving our younger generation the opportunity to participate and be involved with some aspects of the Museum.

Once again I would like to thank all our volunteers and members of various community groups for your continuing support and valuable contributions to our "Treasure" in Margate.

Kind regards

Judi Castle

President

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## Visit to the Museum by Eric Bolt

Kees Wierenga



Eric Bolt and Kees

On the last day of the year we had a visit from Eric Bolt, youngest son of Dirk and Kusha Bolt. Our Museum has many records of the work of these two pioneer Dutch migrants.

It was my pleasure to host Eric and various family members to show them our records. We have various books by and about the work of their parents in the 1950s and 60s. We also have large story and photo boards, not on permanent display. Eric was delighted to learn more of the legacy of his parents.

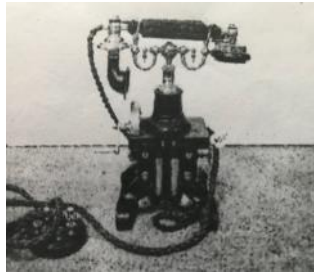
Whilst Eric was at the Museum, he noticed that we did not appear to have any English language copies of his mother Kusha's book "Letters to Tasmania". We do, in fact, hold 2 copies of the Dutch language "Brievin uit Tasmanie" by A.M.C. Bolt – they have actually been lent out too! Eric has promised to provide a couple of English language copies for the Museum.



L-R Mark, Greg, Ingrid, Eric and Kees

## Chris Nelan (nee Pearsall)

I was born about eight weeks premature in Hobart in 1944, 3<sup>rd</sup> daughter to Joyce and Roy Pearsall of "Whitewater" Kingston. I wasn't expected to survive. Mum had a phone line but no telephone but thankfully I had a great Aunt working at Cadburys and they kindly donated the phone at left so Mum could get medical help for me. Not only am I indebted to Cadburys but also Dr Ashbarry back then who just seemed to arrive at the farm at that vital moment.



The phone is available to view in the Channel Museum at Margate.



## Whitewater Homestead 1870-2015



I grew up on the property called "Whitewater" in Kingston (now Whitewater Estate). Along with our parents, myself and my four siblings we had to work hard picking apples, making butter and tending to the numerous animals, but it was an idyllic childhood, as Whitewater Creek ran through the property and was a magical place to explore. We would walk from the homestead up the creek (on the western side) right out to the worker's cottage near the end of Maddocks Road and return via the paddocks and over the run to our home. There were old ruins, platypus, trout, eels, eagles, devils, quolls, ringtail and brushtail possums, snakes, plus lots of incredible fossils in the creek bed. A magical place for children

to explore. It was always our hope that when we no longer had the farm, that the rough walking track along the creek, would be made available for the public to enjoy.

Solomon Baynton built the homestead in 1870 from bricks hand made from clay on the property. The first Pearsall family moved in in June 1906 and the last Pearsall descendants left in 2015 when the property sadly, was finally sold.

The property was in the Pearsall family for 110 years and the old diaries reveal so much history about the property, which members of the public would find extremely interesting. We still hope a public walking trail will come to fruition one day as it would be a huge asset for the residents of Kingborough, "the jewel in the crown" so to speak.



I was educated at Snug Area School as there was no bus from the farm to Kingston Primary. However, it suited me as my grandparents, Frank and Myrtle Lewis lived at Electrona as Frank was Manager of the Drum Factory at the Carbide Works. However, after losing everything they owned in the 1967 Bush Fires, my father sold my "Lewis" grandparents some land and they built their home in the bush opposite the Antarctic Base, which was next to my sister, Helen and Robin Pyke's home and swimming pool. (Both homes were recently demolished so that Spring Farm Village could be constructed).

*A much loved view from the paddock just below the homestead*

From Snug School I went on to Ogilvie High for four years and then gained a junior Secretarial position in the office of the Manager of the ABC. A very daunting experience but I learnt a great deal and am ever so grateful to the staff of that time for their support, values and

encouragement.

In early 1960 I was very fortunate to meet a Policeman, Constable Ron Nelan, from Penrith in NSW. He was stationed at Kingston and visited the farm several times with enquiries.

Ron and I later became good friends and we married at St Clements Church in 1964. From there we moved to the Police Residence at Westbury. Both our son and daughter were born whilst we were at Westbury.

Whilst we were living at Westbury Ron received word that he and another Constable from Kingston Police Station, Constable Ron Philpott, had both been awarded the British Empire Medal for bravery for disarming a man in 1963. I remember the incident well as we had just become engaged!!!

In 1968, we moved to Swansea Police Residence where we stayed for eleven years. I was fortunate to get a job in the office at Swansea School. We loved our years both at Westbury and Swansea but life as a Policeman's wife with two young children was a challenge as wives in those days answered the phone and police radio calls and assisted with all sorts of situations, e.g. accidents, drownings, domestic disputes etc. by helping calm families of the victims.

During my time at Swansea, I trained as a volunteer ambulance attendant. Travelling to Hobart with patients was an interesting exercise as it was a long journey around some very tricky bends. I will always treasure the mateship of the team and the things I learned at that time.

In 1979 we moved to the Woodbridge Police Residence so that our children could attend High School at Woodbridge. Ron's Police work covered Woodbridge, lower Channel to Gordon and also Cygnet at busy times.

Shortly after arriving in Woodbridge I gained a small position at the Marine Studies Centre cleaning the fish tanks but then later in the year, was employed for longer hours as the Office Assistant. I stayed in that position for 20 years and made great friendships with some of the staff which still continues today.



**Ron Nelan**

In 1987 we moved into our own home in Charlton St Snug where we spent many happy years until Ron's health started to fail and we decided to move into Snug Seniors Village.

Sadly, the 33 years in the Police Force took its toll and Ron passed away unexpectedly in 2006. He was only 73. However, one has to be thankful, that prior to his death, we did fit a lot into our 43 years of marriage. We went overseas twice looking for Nelans in Ireland, England, France, Canada, Washington DC, Arizona and Pittsburgh and we found several reasonably close connections, which gave us great joy and lifelong memories.

My interest in family history is never ending. John Pearsall who came out on the *Calcutta* in 1804 is my 3x great grandfather. Other names connected to the Pearsall family are Nicholls, Young, Tollard and Marsden who lived mainly in Clarence and Kingborough areas. On the Lewis side of the family are Miles, Harvey and Eason, who are connected to Green Ponds, Bicheno, Buckland and Battery Point areas. The Miles family came on the ship called the *Marquis of Angelsea* in 1829 which was shipwrecked in the Swan River. They then came on the *Eagle* to Hobart. I have letters in respect to the Miles and Harvey families dating back to the mid 1800s which give an incredible picture of life back then.

My 3x great grandmother, Mary Ann Eason, came on the *Princes Royal* which ran aground in Frederick Henry Bay 24<sup>th</sup> August in 1832. She then went on to marry William Harvey from Green Ponds and they later moved to "Zelwood" at Buckland. William Harvey later became a Policeman at Bicheno which, strange to say was the area my husband Ron had to cover until the new Police Station at Bicheno was built in the early 1970s.

I think my interest in history has "rubbed off" on to two of my grandchildren as one does tours at the Female Factory and the other does tours on a voluntary basis, at the Penitentiary.

The world is changing rapidly but my hope is that our history will always be treasured and recorded.

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The Channel Museum Library holds a number of school enrolment registers for various schools in the D'Entrecasteaux Channel area, dating from the early 1900s. Library volunteers like myself have been gradually working through these registers to enter data recorded by the schools in relation to each student they enrolled to provide an index of both students and their parents.

At first glance, these registers provide a useful tool for anyone researching their family histories to identify when and where one or more of their ancestors enrolled in a school in the Channel. This information can help establish when the family moved to the area, which can be extremely useful in identifying other areas of research.

However, the information recorded by each school in relation to enrolling or re-enrolling pupils also provides a valuable snapshot of the community and commercial life of the particular area covered by the schools. Among the information that was recorded are the names of both pupils and their parents, the township or area in which the family lived, as well as the occupation of the parent. When considered over time, these pieces of information describe the changing nature of an area.

Nowhere is this more evident than in relation to the stated occupations of parents. In the case of one school, the number of listed occupations for the period between 1918 to 1929 was 16. Of that number, the two most common occupations were orchardist and labourer. At this time, people were likely to live, work and attend schools in relatively close proximity. Among other occupations noted are farmer, hop grower, hop picker, store keeper, builder, butcher and the rather specific title of "bridge carpenter". Also listed was a post mistress, an engineer and a solicitor.

However, for the period 1946 to 1955, the number of listed occupations in relation to enrolments for the same school was 61. During this period, the most common occupational description was "labourer", with "farmer" the next most common. Other listed occupations indicate technological changes that created new types of occupations. For example, the blacksmith and stable hand jobs of the past were replaced with occupations such as garage owner, mechanic, lorry driver, carbide worker, electrical engineer, machinist and linesman.

In addition, with the increased use of motorised transport, people could travel daily for their employment to take up jobs that were offered by a State or Local Government authority. This opened up a range of opportunities for both skilled and unskilled employment. However, better transport also led to the closure of smaller local schools as children could be transported to larger centralised schools.

These registers also noted schools in which some children were previously enrolled. In some instances, it is possible to see a pattern of children being regularly re-enrolled at a school as their parents were employed on a seasonal basis on farms or orchards. For those children, frequent changes in schools must have been extremely disruptive.

Some of the listed occupations have disappeared as the industries they represent have ceased or dramatically changed. For example, hop grower, coal miner, packing shed foreman, bread carter, green grocer, wood cutter. The description "lorry driver" was gradually replaced by "truck driver", perhaps reflecting the increasing influence of American industry and language.

Technological and industrial developments such as the establishment of the Hydro Electric Commission and the Carbide Works at Electrona created employment opportunities for many people, particularly those families leaving Europe after World War 2. Skilled occupations such as furnace hand, fitter and turner, boiler attendant, linesman, telephone technician, as well as industry-specific labouring positions become more common.

For women, terms such as "home duties" or "domestic duties" are gradually replaced with the equally indifferent term "housewife". However, by the late 1950s, more skilled occupations for women such as typist, stenographer or clerk start to appear.

For men, work as a labourer is a constant listed occupation throughout the period covered by these school registers. In the early years, this form of employment was rural based on farms or orchards. In the post-War years, State and Local Government organisations grew and offered skilled positions such as tram or trolley driver, tram conductor, clerk, as well as unskilled positions, which on occasion was simply referred to as "worker" – for example, Council worker.

The latter title was often applied in relation to government agencies that no longer exist and which to future

generations may be meaningless. For example:

**PWD worker** – this refers to the Government agency, Public Works Department of Tasmania, which existed from 1835 until it was abolished in 1977. This agency was responsible for managing roads, railways, bridges and public buildings. Today, these functions are spread across various state government bodies and local councils, or out-sourced to private companies.

**PMG worker** – this refers to the Commonwealth Government body the Postmaster-General's Department. Established in 1901, this agency was responsible for the provision of postal and telegraphic services throughout Australia. It was abolished at the end of 1975 and replaced by two separate legal entities – Telecom Australia, later renamed Telstra; and Australia Post.

**MTT worker** – this refers to the Metropolitan Transport Trust which was formed by the Tasmanian State Government in 1955 to replace the municipal tramway and trolleybus operations in Hobart and Launceston. By the end of the 1960s, both trams and trolley buses had been fully replaced by buses. The name of the business was changed to its current name of Metro Tasmania in the 1980s.

Another reflection of broader social change in the country is the increasing number of parents who are listed post-1945 as pensioners. The concept of invalid and aged persons pensions began in Australia in 1908, but greatly expanded after the War. The enrolment registers note various forms of pensioners, including those receiving military pensions, the TPI pension (Totally and Permanently Incapacitated pension) issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as the invalid pension.

In the period from 1966 to 1970 (which is the last year of enrolment entries for this school held in the Museum's Library), the list of occupations becomes even more varied. Descriptions such as foreman, zinc worker, welder, plant operator, bulldozer or grader driver, road patrol officer, milk vendor, cleaner, factory manager, plasterer, architect, joiner, paymaster, fireman, instructor, works superintendent, mechanical engineer, panel beater, and assistant manager appear. Equally, the traditional occupations of farmer, orchardist and labourer continue to appear.

It was interesting to find that on several occasions, a new school year started on 26 January, or Australia Day. Which shows that this date was not a designated public holiday in Tasmania during the period covered by the enrolment registers held in the Museum Library. While the day was a public holiday in New South Wales from the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it was not until 1994 that a unified approach was taken across all states and territories and the day designated as a national public holiday.



*Above: Students at Sandfly School, early 1900s*

*Right: Students at Snug School early 1900s*

School registers for Sandfly, Snug and Margae have been indexed by the Museum Library.



# Temporary exhibition

## Marion's Original Art : Truth, Beauty, & Goodness — January—February 2026

Marion lives in Margate with husband Steve. Over the years they have collaborated on illustrated books for children. The prints in the exhibition were individually numbered and signed by Marion Isham.



“Each print is lifted individually into paper by pressure from the etching press. Wet ink sits within the scratched lines on plastic or cardboard ‘plates’. The lines make up the image. The image is transferred to paper as it passes through the press.

The subject of the prints in the exhibition orbits around the turbulent two years since the terrorist attack of October 7th. They represent a gamut of horror, fear, stalwart hope, and even joy, amid chaos and violence.” — Marion Isham



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## Blooming Church 2026

St. David's Cathedral in Hobart had its 58th annual floral festival Blooming Church on the Regatta Day weekend, 7th to the 9th February.

The Channel Museum was again represented with an arrangement of flowers.

Our participation gave us an opportunity to offer information about the Museum to the many visitors to the festival.

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## Flakemore: A Truly Tasmanian Name : *From England's West Midlands to Tasmania*

Flakemore is one of the rarest surnames in Australia, even the world, and is strongly linked to Tasmania. Although the name began in England, its survival and modern identity are largely Tasmanian. The story of the name is closely tied to the convict system, old record-keeping practices, and one key family.

The Flakemore family came from England's Black Country in the West Midlands, an area known for coal mining and heavy industry. The region took its name from the soot produced by furnaces and mines.

In 1809, James Flakemore married Lucy Priest in Dudley. However, their children were baptised under the surname **Faulkner** in nearby Halesowen. This kind of variation was common at the time. Many people could not read or write, accents differed, and parish clerks often wrote names as they heard them. Unusual names were frequently changed to more familiar ones.

As a result, members of the same family appeared in records under many spellings, including Flakemore, Faulkner, Falkner, Foulkner, Fauknal and even more distorted versions. These differences usually reflected clerical spelling rather than deliberate name changes.

### John Flakemore: Convict and Founder of the Name

The surname's survival largely comes down to John Flakemore. Born in 1823, he was baptised as **Faulkner**. He worked as a collier and miner.

In 1849, John was convicted at Dudley of robbery with violence and sentenced to ten years' transportation. At this point, officials recorded his name as **Flakemore**. Under the strict convict record system, this spelling became fixed. Once entered into the official documents, names were rarely altered.

John spent time in English prisons and on the prison hulk *Stirling Castle* before being transported to Van Diemen's Land in 1853 aboard the *St Vincent*. All records listed him as Flakemore, and this spelling remained for the rest of his life.

Family stories later claimed he changed his name intentionally due to a dispute with a brother, or to distance himself and his crime from his family, but it is far more likely that the shift resulted from official record-keeping rather than personal choice.

John's brothers help explain why the surname became rare. They continued using **Faulkner**, a common English name, and later generations largely kept that spelling. Any early appearances of Flakemore in England gradually disappeared back into Faulkner. One brother even immigrated to Tasmania as Faulkner and maintained this name even though his brother was John Flakemore.

In Tasmania the Flakemore spelling flourished and passed down through John's many descendants.

John received a conditional pardon and settled in the Huon district. In 1865, he married Martha Hall at Franklin. Together they raised a large family and became established members of the community.

John died in 1909 and was buried at Franklin. By the time of his wife Martha's death in 1924, there were at least 90 grandchildren born to the eleven Flakemore offspring, with around half of them bearing the surname **Flakemore**

### A Tasmanian Name made through history

Flakemore is not simply an English name brought unchanged to Australia. Instead, it was shaped by spelling variations, fixed by convict administration, and preserved through one Tasmanian family line.

In England, the family name was mostly Faulkner. In Tasmania, through John, it became Flakemore.

For this reason, Flakemore can truly be considered a Tasmanian surname — rare, localised, and closely tied to the island's colonial history.

A more detailed Flakemore family history, including sources and extended family lines, is available from the author or can be accessed at the Hobart branch of the Tasmanian Family History Library and the Channel Museum.

Maree Da Costa



## Nights at the Museum

Scotland—then and now — Neil Sorensen

Wednesday 10th December 2025



*Neil and Judi on the night*

Neil is a former Australian Antarctic Division employee, now retired. He enjoys photography and trying to showcase areas he has visited through his photographs.

Neil gave a very entertaining talk about Scotland, illustrating his travels in Scotland with photographs and interesting snippets about Scotland's history and culture.

Neil will return in 2026 and talk about his travels in Ireland.

## A Tasmanian tale of fear, loathing and love—Andy Henebury — Wednesday 11th February 2026

Andy spoke about Solomon Bray, a man sent to Van Diemen's Land and his unique means of survival which led to his infamy. Was Solomon evil? Or a victim of circumstance? Andy gave a very well-researched talk about Solomon (1816-1897).

"Solomon Blay (Bleay), boatman, was sentenced to 14 years transportation for attempted counterfeiting. It was his third conviction. He had previously been sentenced to 12 months for stealing potatoes and four months for stealing onions.

Blay arrived in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in 1836 aboard the *Sarah*. According to the surgeon's report he was flogged on board the ship for insolence and was 'as bad as can be'. He was described as being 5 feet 8½ inches tall with dark brown hair and blue eyes. He was appointed a police constable in May 1838 but was dismissed from the position in October 1839 due to lack of discipline with alcohol and was sent to a chain gang. In 1840 he applied for the position of hangman. He was granted a ticket of leave on 20 August 1849, a conditional pardon on 6 July 1850 and a free pardon on 21 February 1857.

He performed his last hanging at the age of 71." (<https://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/biography/blay-solomon-22788> accessed 22/02/2026)

Put in the context of the times, and information Andy imparted, most of the audience thought Solomon was a victim of circumstance.

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## Grant success

The Museum has been successful with a grant application made by Lara Colrain, with the Library's help, to rehouse some archival material. The Minister for Arts and Heritage, the Hon. Madeleine Ogilvie MP, has approved a grant of \$2,500 to support a collection rehousing project.

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*Judi presents Andy with a token of appreciation*

# The Rajah Quilt comes to Franklin

Carol Cane

The Rajah Quilt is one of Australia’s most important textiles - it is inextricably linked to Franklin, yet hardly anyone has heard of it.



***The Rajah Quilt, stitched by 29 female convicts on their passage between England and Van Dieman’s and in 1841.***

Anne Thompson, after being captivated by the quilt at an exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia (NGA) in 2024, with her husband Rob have made it their mission to make it available for everyone to see.

“I took a real liking to this particular quilt,” said Anne. “Because it showed all the characteristics of something that was real - blood stains from pricked fingers, marks left by mistakes – it wasn’t perfect, it was emotional.”

The story of the Rajah Quilt is woven into Tasmanian colonial history. On 5 April 1841, the ship *Rajah* set sail from Woolwich, England, bound for Van Diemen’s Land carrying 180 convict women and their children, a surgeon and three free passengers.

The British Ladies Society for the Reformation of Female Prisoners (BLSRFP) provided the women with a collection of sewing materials to occupy them during the 15-week voyage. The plan was for each woman to sew a quilt to use, or sell on arrival. Instead, under the guidance of Kezia Hayter, a young woman sent to assist Lady Franklin in setting up a similar

Ladies’ Society in Van Diemen’s Land, an over three metre square quilt made of 2,815 fabric pieces was created and presented to Lady Franklin on arrival in Hobart on July 19, 1841.

Examination has shown that the quilt was worked on by 29 different women, based on the different ‘stitchings’. While it is easy to imagine the women stitching away as their vessel sailed gently over the sea, reality was a different story. The women existed in poorly ventilated, dark spaces below decks, with limited fresh water for washing. After presenting the quilt to Lady Franklin the quilt was sent back to Elizabeth Fry, leader of the BLSRFP but then dropped out of sight. In around 1935, a letter was sent by E. Winifred Ure of Edinburgh to the Sunday Times London, seeking information about a patchwork quilt that had been in her friend’s family for many years. There was one letter in response and nothing further was heard about the quilt until it surfaced in an attic in Edinburgh in 1987.

It was purchased and given by the Australian Textile Fund to the NGA in 1989. Anne and Rob Thompson believe it belongs back in the town named for Lady Franklin, who established it as a settlement. The original quilt is extremely delicate, and after negotiations, Anne Thompson has been granted a licence by the NGA for a once only copy of the Rajah Quilt printed on synthetic fabric, true to size and colour.

“Our efforts are purely philanthropic, with our intention and hope for the quilt’s display in perpetuity in Franklin” Anne said.

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## Office Bearers 2025-2026

President:	Judi Castle
Vice President:	Andrew Tomes
Secretary:	Cathy Fyfe
Treasurer:	Sarah Jackson
Curator:	Lara Colrain
Public Officer	Andrew Tomes

## Committee Members 2025-2026

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Andrew Wadsley	Mary Tomny
Colin Hocking	Andy Henebury
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