John Herbert Severn Wild (1904–92) was educated at Clifton College and then at Brasenose College, where he got a Third in Classics in 1927 and a Second in Theology in 1928. After being ordained priest, he was a curate at St. Aidan, Newcastle-upon-Tyne from 1929–33.

In 1933, Wild was elected Chaplain Fellow of University College. He was soon given other duties: in 1934–40 he was Junior Dean; from 1935–45 he was Praelector in Theology; and from 1937–45 he was Domestic Bursar. It was during the war years, however, that Wild took a central role in College life. Exempted from war service on medical grounds, he was the only comparatively youthful Fellow left in College during this time, and as the Master, Sir William Beveridge, became increasingly involved in outside activities, not least the writing of the Beveridge Report, so a great many of his duties fell to Wild. He was therefore Dean from 1940–2, Vice-Master in 1942–3, and then Pro-Master (a newly created post) from 1943–5.

In December 1944, when Sir William Beveridge, faced with a choice between standing for Parliament and retaining the Mastership, chose the former, Wild was offered the Mastership, and he was elected on 18 January 1945 with effect from 5 April 1945. He continued to act as Chaplain. He remains the only clerical Master of University College elected since 1881. There can be little doubt that Wild was elected Master in large part thanks to his efforts in keeping the College going during the Second World War.

Wild had a difficult time as Master, as he had to face the challenges of rebuilding the College during the post-war years. He also endured personal tragedy, in that he and his wife lost several children in infancy. On the other hand, his tenure was marked by the celebrations held in 1949 to mark the 700th anniversary of the benefaction of William of Durham. He was also much loved for his good nature.

Nevertheless, perhaps it was a fortunate change for Wild when in April 1951, he was appointed Dean of Durham Cathedral. The fact that his predecessor there was the father of Giles Alington (F. 1944–56), and that the Prime Minister who appointed him was Clement Attlee (matr. Univ. 1901), suggests that several parties had planned this move carefully. Wild resigned his Mastership with effect from 31 August 1951, and was elected an Honorary Fellow of the College in October 1951. Wild remained at Durham until his retirement in 1973.

Of the papers in this collection, UC:MA47/A3/4, UC:MA47/MS2/9–10, UC:MA47/MS3/2, UC:MA47/P1/2–3, UC:MA47/P2/1–12, and UC:MA47/X1/1 and 3–4 were all found in the archives during the stocktaking of July 1993. UC:MA47/F1/1 and UC:MA47/MS1/10–13 had been found in Durham Cathedral Library and were transferred to the College through Wild’s widow Margaret in December 2002 as Accession No. 408. Everything else was presented to the Archives by Gwynne Ovenstone (College Secretary 1947–87) in about 1995.

Further Reading:

Catalogued in December 2016.
UC:MA47 Papers of John Herbert Severn Wild (Master 1945-51)

UC:MA47/A1 - PAPERS RELATING TO GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS

UC:MA47/A1/1 20 Apr 1933
TS record, initialled by Sir Michael Sadler, of the election of John Wild as Chaplain Fellow with effect from 1 October 1933.

UC:MA47/A1/2 1933–5
Loose sheets of paper (found in a folder titled “College Meetings”) on which Wild made notes about College meetings.

UC:MA47/A1/3 1937–40
Notebook (found in a folder titled “College Secretary”) kept by Wild to record his notes on the meetings of the Governing Body and other College committees.

UC:MA47/A1/4 2 Feb & 19 Mar 1943
TS memoranda by Sir William Beveridge, respectively on the appointment of a Vice-Master and of a Pro-Master (Wild ended up holding both offices).

UC:MA47/A1/5–6 were found in a folder inscribed “Univ. Stated General Meetings”.

UC:MA47/A1/5 1942–7
Bundle of miscellaneous papers, assembled by Wild, comprising various pieces of agenda papers submitted to College meetings between 1942 and 1947. They include financial statements, lists of donations, lists of praelectors and lecturers, and memoranda on the payment of College servants and on Linton-on-Ouse.

UC:MA47/A1/6 9 Oct 1946
Papers on the Lodge Estates in York and the Linton-on-Ouse Estate, which were submitted to the College meeting on 9 October 1946.

UC:MA47/A2 - COLLEGE LISTS AND OTHER PAPERS ON MEMBERS OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

UC:MA47/A2/1–18 were found in a folder titled “Undergraduates (Univ) 1943/4”, and UC:MA47/A2/19–50 in a folder titled “College Lists - Former Terms”. Several documents dating from 1943–5 give the names of members of Keble College who were being accommodated at University College while their own College was requisitioned for government purposes.

UC:MA47/A2/1 Apr 1943
MS list (3 sheets) in an unknown hand of cadets admitted to University College, April 1943.

UC:MA47/A2/2 Oct 1943
TS list of Freshmen at University College, Michaelmas Term 1943.
UC:MA47 Papers of John Herbert Severn Wild (Master 1945-51)

UC:MA47/A2/3  Oct 1943
MS notes (2 sheets) in Wild’s hand on Freshmen from University College and Keble, Michaelmas Term 1943.

UC:MA47/A2/4  Oct 1943
MS list (2 sheets) in Wild’s hand of Freshmen at University College, Michaelmas Term 1943.

UC:MA47/A2/5  Oct 1943
Room lists for Michaelmas Term 1943.

UC:MA47/A2/6  8 Jan 1944
Letter from the Domestic Bursar of Hertford College, asking for a return of the number of undergraduates at each College, with figures for University College filled in at the bottom by Wild.

UC:MA47/A2/7  Jan 1944
Printed list of members of University College and Keble College, Michaelmas Term 1943, amended for Hilary Term 1944.

UC:MA47/A2/8  Jan 1944
TS list of Freshmen at University College. Hilary Term 1944.

UC:MA47/A2/9  2 Feb 1944
TS list of members of University College expected to come into residence at the end of the war, 2 Feb 1944.

UC:MA47/A2/10  28 Mar 1944
TS notes by Wild on cadets from University College sent to the Senior Chaplain on HMS Ganges, 28 Mar 1944. Deceased cadets are T. W. M. Steele, C. A. Wright, L. G. Chasty, and N. W. Stevenson. All these undergraduates matriculated in 1943.

UC:MA47/A2/11  24 Apr 1944
Letter from the Domestic Bursar of Hertford College, asking for a return of the number of undergraduates at each College, with figures for University College filled in at the bottom by Wild.

UC:MA47/A2/12  Apr 1944

UC:MA47/A2/13  Apr 1944
MS List (2 sheets) in Wild’s hand of Freshmen for University College and Keble College for Trinity Term 1944.

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UC:MA47 Papers of John Herbert Severn Wild (Master 1945-51)

UC:MA47/A2/14–15  Apr 1944
Two copies of a TS list of Freshmen for University College for Trinity Term 1944.

UC:MA47/A2/16–17  Apr 1944
Two copies of a TS list of Service Probationers for University College, Trinity Term 1944.

UC:MA47/A2/18  Apr 1944
TS list of Cadets for University College and Keble College, Trinity Term 1944.

UC:MA47/A2/19–20  Oct 1944
Typed list of members of University College and MS list, in Wild’s hand, of members of Keble College at University College in Michaelmas Term 1944.

UC:MA47/A2/21  19 Oct 1944
Letter from the Domestic Bursar of Hertford College, asking for a return of the number of undergraduates at each College, with figures for University College filled in at the bottom.

UC:MA47/A2/22  n.d. (c. 1944?)
Map annotated by Wild to show the comparative locations of University College and the various training grounds for the armed services, undated, but presumably c. 1944.

UC:MA47/A2/23  Oct 1944
Typed list of cadets at University College, Michaelmas Term 1944.

UC:MA47/A2/24  Jan 1945
Printed list of members of University and Keble Colleges at University College for Michaelmas Term 1944, amended for Hilary Term 1945.

UC:MA47/A2/25  Apr 1945
Printed list of members of University and Keble Colleges at University College for Michaelmas Term 1944, amended for Trinity Term 1945.

UC:MA47/A2/26  Oct 1945
Printed list of members of University College for Michaelmas Term 1945.

UC:MA47/A2/27–28  Oct 1945
TS list and MS list, in Wild’s hand, of Freshmen coming up in Michaelmas Term 1945.

UC:MA47/A2/29  Jan 1946
Printed list of members of University College for Michaelmas Term 1945, amended for Hilary Term 1946.

UC:MA47/A2/30  31 Jan 1946
MS list, in Wild’s hand, of admissions for January 1946.
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UC:MA47 Papers of John Herbert Severn Wild (Master 1945-51)

UC:MA47/A2/31
TS list of undergraduates coming up in Trinity Term 1946. 24 Apr 1946

UC:MA47/A2/32
TS list of members of University College for Trinity Term 1946. Apr 1946

UC:MA47/A2/33
TS list of occupants of rooms for Trinity Term 1946. Apr 1946

UC:MA47/A2/34–35
Two copies of printed list of members of University College for Michaelmas Term 1946. Oct 1946

UC:MA47/A2/36
TS list of occupants of rooms for the academic year 1946/7. Oct 1946

UC:MA47/A2/37–38
Two copies of printed list of members of University College for Michaelmas Term 1946, amended in different ways for Hilary Term 1947. Jan 1947

UC:MA47/A2/39–40
TS lists of rota for Scholars reading Grace in Hall and Lessons in Chapel, one for Hilary Term 1947, amended for Trinity Term 1947, and the other for Trinity Term 1947. 20 Jan & 23 Apr 1947

UC:MA47/A2/41
TS list of men going down at the end of Trinity Term 1947. Apr 1947

UC:MA47/A2/42
Printed list of members of University College for Michaelmas Term 1947. Oct 1947

UC:MA47/A2/43–44
Two MS lists in Wild’s hand of married undergraduates at the College in Michaelmas Term 1947. Oct 1947

UC:MA47/A2/45
TS list of occupants of rooms for Michaelmas Term 1947. Oct 1947

UC:MA47/A2/46
Printed list of members of University College for Michaelmas Term 1947, amended for Trinity Term 1948. Jan 1948

UC:MA47/A2/47
TS list of occupants of rooms Hilary Term 1948. Jan 1948

UC:MA47/A2/48
TS list of men going down at the end of Trinity Term 1948. Apr 1948

UC:MA47/A2/49
Printed list of members of University College for Michaelmas Term 1948. Oct 1948

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UC:MA47 Papers of John Herbert Severn Wild (Master 1945-51)

UC:MA47/A2/50 Oct 1948
TS list of occupants of rooms for Michaelmas Term 1948.

UC:MA47/A3 - PAPERS ON OTHER ASPECTS OF COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION

UC:MA47/A3/1 Jun 1936–Jan 1937
Memorandum by G. D. H. Cole (F. 1925–44) proposing that the Mastership in its current form be replaced by a system in which Fellows assumed the role in turn for a fixed number of years, with correspondence between him and Wild.

UC:MA47/A3/2 Mar 1937
TS notes assembled by Wild concerning the plans for the refurbishment of the Library by A. S. G. Butler. The notes are mainly about the expressing of concerns about the cost of the project.

UC:MA47/A3/3 1938–1949
Three items from a folder titled “Costs for Undergraduates”, comprising a sheet of figures showing the effect of the new system of charges introduced in October 1938, a printed memorandum on University and College expenses dated by Wild to 1947, and a memorandum by Peter Strawson (F. 1948–68) on a revision to undergraduate charges, dated 9 May 1949.

UC:MA47/A3/4 1946
Memorandum by John Wild on the cost of living at University College from 1936–46.
UC:MA47 Papers of John Herbert Severn Wild (Master 1945-51)

UC:MA47/C1 - MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS

UC:MA47/C1/1
Card in Wild’s hand with a list of books on University College recommended him by Sir Michael Sadler.

UC:MA47/C1/2
Letter from Mary Poynton, wife of A. B. Poynton (F. 1894–1935; M. 1935–7) to John Wild, reflecting on her husband’s early months as Master.

UC:MA47/C1/3
Notes, including letters from A. S. L. Farquharson and C. H. Wilkinson of Worcester College, on the meaning of the phrase “a rump and dozen” [3 items].

UC:MA47/F1 - WILD’S BATTELS BILLS

UC:MA47/F1/1
Folder containing a complete set of Wild’s College batells.

UC:MA47/MS1 - DOCUMENTS ON WILD’S ACTIVITIES AS CHAPLAIN AND PRIEST

UC:MA47/MS1/1–8 and 14–15 were found in a folder inscribed “College Chapel”

UC:MA47/MS1/1
Letters to Wild from Sir Michael Sadler and “F” (A. S. L. Farquharson) both congratulating him on his first sermon in Chapel.

UC:MA47/MS1/2
Text of an address given by A. B. Poynton in Chapel at the first Sunday of the academic year.

UC:MA47/MS1/3
Text of an address given by A. B. Poynton at his last service in Chapel as Master, with a letter from Poynton to Wild explaining his reasons for writing it.

UC:MA47/MS1/4–5
Cutting from the Guardian, containing an article by Wild titled “The Church and the Oxford Undergraduate”, and a typescript of the same.

UC:MA47/MS1/6
Letter to Wild from A. V. C. Moore, the father of Desmond Moore (matr. 1933), who was killed in North Africa in 1942. Moore’s father encloses typed extracts of letters from Moore’s commanding officer, army chaplain, and the headmaster where he had taught before the war. [4 items]

UC:MA47/MS1/7
Typescript of a sermon given by F. E. Hutchinson at a memorial service (or funeral?) for Sir Michael Sadler (M. 1923–34).

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UC:MA47 Papers of John Herbert Severn Wild (Master 1945-51)

**UC:MA47/MS1/8**  29 Sep 1949
Order of Service for the dedication of the Second World War Memorial in the Antechapel. Enclosed within it is the text of the address preached by Wild at that event.

**UC:MA47/MS1/9**  29 Sep 1949
Another version of the text of the address given by Wild at the dedication of the Second World War Memorial.

**UC:MA47/MS1/10**  Jun 1950
Bundle of cuttings and notes assembled by Wild about the death of Kenneth Leys (F. 1908–42) [9 items].

**UC:MA47/MS1/11**  24 Jun 1950
Order of service for the funeral of Kenneth Leys, at Isel, Cumberland, with notes for a sermon preached by Wild [7 items].

**UC:MA47/MS1/12**  30 Sep 1950
Notes by Wild for an address on Kenneth Leys delivered in the Chapel of University College at an Old Members Meeting.

**UC:MA47/MS1/13**  9 Nov 1950
Cutting from the *Oxford Magazine* with an obituary for Kenneth Leys by R. H. Tawney.

**UC:MA47/MS1/14**  25 Jan 1951
Letter from the Bishop of Oxford to John Wild on his refusal to hear the confession of anyone towards whom he stands in any kind of authority.

**UC:MA47/MS1/15**  1951
Note by Wilde on the number of communicants in Chapel for all terms from Michaelmas Term 1933 to Trinity Term 1951.

**UC:MA47/MS1/16**  14 Oct 1966
Folder containing material relating to the memorial service for A. F. (Freddie) Wells (F. 1935–66) in the College Chapel. These include an order of service, Wild’s notes for the sermon which he gave for the occasion, and memoirs of Wells written for Wild by Richard Fletcher (matr. 1935) and John Beament (matr. 1947).

**UC:MA47/MS1/17**  7 Dec 1978
Order of service for a service of thanksgiving for Arthur Goodhart (F. 1931–51; M. 1951–63) held at the University Church. Wild has noted that he read some of the prayers at this event.

**UC:MA47/MS1/18**  17 Nov 1979
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UC:MA47 Papers of John Herbert Severn Wild (Master 1945-51)

Order of service for a service of thanksgiving for Kenneth Wheare (F. 1939–44), held at Christ Church Cathedral.

UC:MA47/MS2 - DOCUMENTS ON THE 700TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BENEFACTION OF WILLIAM OF DURHAM

UC:MA47/MS2/1–8 and 11 were found in a folder inscribed “William of Durham Centenary etc.”

UC:MA47/MS2/1 n.d. (c. 1948?)
Printed appeal from the Master requesting contributions for a War Memorial fund, to pay for a memorial to the fallen in the Chapel, a dining room to be built on the site of the Shelley Memorial, and the creation of a War Memorial Fund to endow bursaries for students. Undated, but presumably c. 1948.

UC:MA47/MS2/2 Jun 1949
Printed invitation to lunch at University College, 1 July 1949, to mark the 700th anniversary of the benefaction of William of Durham.

UC:MA47/MS2/3 14 Jun 1949
Letter from Lord Beveridge to John Wild. Beveridge regrets that he cannot come to the lunch on 1 July, and recalls how he salvaged the bust of King Alfred which used to stand in the Winter Common Room, and had it moved to the Library. The letter is written on notepaper headed “The Master’s Lodgings”, even though Beveridge had ceased to be Master in 1945.

UC:MA47/MS2/4–5 1 Jul 1949
Two copies of the printed seating plan for lunch at University College on 1 July 1949.

UC:MA47/MS2/6 1 Jul 1949
Notes for a speech delivered by John Wild at the anniversary lunch on 1 July 1949.

UC:MA47/MS2/7–8 1 Jul 1949
Two cuttings from the Times of 1 July 1949, with articles about the 700th anniversary of University College, one of which was by David Cox.

UC:MA47/MS2/9 1 Jul 1949
Complete copy of The Times with the articles about the 700th anniversary of the benefaction of William of Durham.

UC:MA47/MS2/10 2 Jul 1949
Copy of the Oxford Mail, reporting on the lunch party held to celebrate the 700th anniversary of the benefaction of William of Durham. Photographs of attendees are included.

UC:MA47/MS2/11 1950
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UC:MA47 Papers of John Herbert Severn Wild (Master 1945-51)

TS by David Cox, titled “Outline History of University College”, dated 1950.

UC:MA47/MS3 - DOCUMENTS ON THE HISTORY OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

UC:MA47/MS3/1
1946
Typescript by Wild titled “University College in War-Time”. The typescript was used as the basis of two articles published in the University College Records of 1971 and 1972, one about the College in wartime, and the other about air raid precautions. The typescript is undated, but the Editor of the Record says that it was written in 1946.

UC:MA47/MS3/2
May 1949
Letter from M. R. Toynbee to John Wild, enclosing notes taken from the account book of the Radcliffe Trustees concerning the building of Radcliffe Quadrangle, and Wilde’s reply. This includes information about the commissioning of the statutes of John Radcliffe and Mary II.

UC:MA47/MS3/3
Dec 1949
Typescript prepared by John Wild containing material about the sending down of the College in 1880. It is based on correspondence with Michael Sadleir, son of Sir Michael Sadler (M. 1923–34), who found the material among his father’s papers, and includes a full account of the event by Sir George Barnes (matr. 1876), and transcripts of Sadler’s correspondence with Sir George and his brother Arthur (matr. 1880), all of which date from 1932.

UC:MA47/MS3/4
1977–9
Envelope of papers relating to an article on social work carried out by members of University College in London, which was co-authored by Wild and Timothy Gee (matr. 1957) and published in the University College Record of 1979. It includes letters to Wild from Gee himself, David Cox (F. 1939–80), Sir David Steel (matr. 1935), Richard Fletcher (matr. 1935), and Russell Acheson (matr. 1935). They all discuss social work carried out by members of the College, with special reference to the Devas Club, Alec Paterson (matr. 1902; Hon. F. 1943) and Basil Henriques (matr. 1909) [10 items].

UC:MA47/N1 - MISCELLANEOUS NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS

UC:MA47/N1/1
4 Oct 1973
Cutting from The Times for an obituary for Sir David Lindsay Keir (Fellow of University College 1921–39; Master of Balliol 1949–65).

UC:MA47/N1/2
1977
Cutting from the Sunday Times (undated, but from 1977) of a review by Hugh Trevor-Roper of Missing Persons by E. R. Dodds (matr. 1912; Hon. F. 1960).

UC:MA47/N1/3
6 Feb 1978
Cutting from The Times containing an obituary for A. D. “Duncs” Gardner (matr. 1904; F. 1927–48).

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UC:MA47 Papers of John Herbert Severn Wild (Master 1945-51)

UC:MA47/N1/4 3 Mar 1978

UC:MA47/P1 - MISCELLANEOUS PHOTOGRAPHS

UC:MA47/P1/1 Mar 1944
Group photograph of undergraduates and Fellows of University College, taken in March 1944. No names given.
Size (including mount): 205 by 255 mm.

UC:MA47/P1/2 n.d. [c. 1947]
Photograph of the silver gilt cup presented to University College by Clement Attlee in 1947. On the back of the photograph are some notes by H. Clifford Smith (matr. 1895) on the history of the cup.
Size: 235 by 180 mm.

UC:MA47/P1/3 Oct 1948
Photograph of the portrait of Clement Attlee by Oswald Birley, taken by Paul Laib. It came in an envelope addressed to Wild, and on the back of the photograph is a note that it was presented to the College by H. Clifford Smith (matr. 1895).
Size: 320 by 250 mm.

UC:MA47/P1/4–5 Nov 1953
Size: Both 65 by 215 mm.
Copyright: Newcastle Chronicle and Journal.

UC:MA47/P1/6 5 Jul 1974
Photograph (taken by Gwynne Ovenstone?) of John Wild, Arthur Goodhart (M. 1951–63), and John, Lord Redcliffe-Maud (M. 1963–76), taken in David Cox’s rooms during the Celebration Ball at University College.
Size: 130 by 180 mm.

UC:MA47/P2 - PHOTOGRAPHS RELATING TO THE 700TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BENEFACITION OF WILLIAM OF DURHAM

UC:MA47/P2/1–12 May 1949
Group of photographs taken by the Central Press Photos, Ltd., to mark the College’s 700th anniversary. They were found in an envelope which says that they were all taken in May 1949. They all measure 210 by 255 mm, and are as follows:

P2/1–3: Three photographs of John Wild seated in his study in the Master’s Lodgings.
P2/4: The Shelley Memorial.

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UC:MA47 Papers of John Herbert Severn Wild (Master 1945-51)

P2/5: The interior of Radcliffe Quadrangle, seen looking towards the statue of John Radcliffe, with some students walking past.
P2/6: The interior of the Main Quadrangle, seen looking northwards (towards the statue of James II), with students milling around.
P2/7: The Master’s Garden, seen looking towards the east end of the Chapel and the Kitchen wing.
P2/8–9: The interior of the first floor of the Library, seen facing east and west respectively, and both with students seen in them.
P2/10–11: Two views of the Main Quadrangle seen looking southwards (towards the Hall and Chapel), again with some students milling around. This shows the facade designed by James Griffith in the late 18th century.
P2/12: The main entrance to the College, as seen from the High Street. Note that the statue of Queen Anne is still holding a sceptre at this date.

UC:MA47/X1 - MISCELLANEOUS EPHEMERA

UC:MA47/X1/1 1 Oct 1942 & 1949
Printed circular from the Master of University College to Old Members of the College giving notice of a proposed memorial to A. S. L. Farquharson (F. 1899–1942). On the back of this document is a note in Wild’s hand observing that the proposed commemoration of John Radcliffe’s bicentenary in 1914 had to be cancelled due to War, and describing the events in 1949 to celebrated the bicentenary of the Radcliffe Camera (see also UC:MA47/X1/3 below).

UC:MA47/X1/2 n.d. (1944?)
Printed circular to Old Members advertising the creation of a Poynton Memorial Fund, in memory of A. B. Poynton (F. 1894–1935; M. 1935–7), who died in 1944.

UC:MA47/X1/3 20 Apr 1949
Envelope containing an invitation to to attend a luncheon at University College to mark the bicentenary of the Radcliffe Library, with an accompanying document containing a seating plan and notes on the day’s events (see also UC:MA47/X1/1 above).

UC:MA47/X1/4 20 Sep 1949
Large printed Latin greeting from the Master and Fellows of University College to the senior members of St. Salvator’s College, St. Andrews, to mark the latter’s 500th anniversary.

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