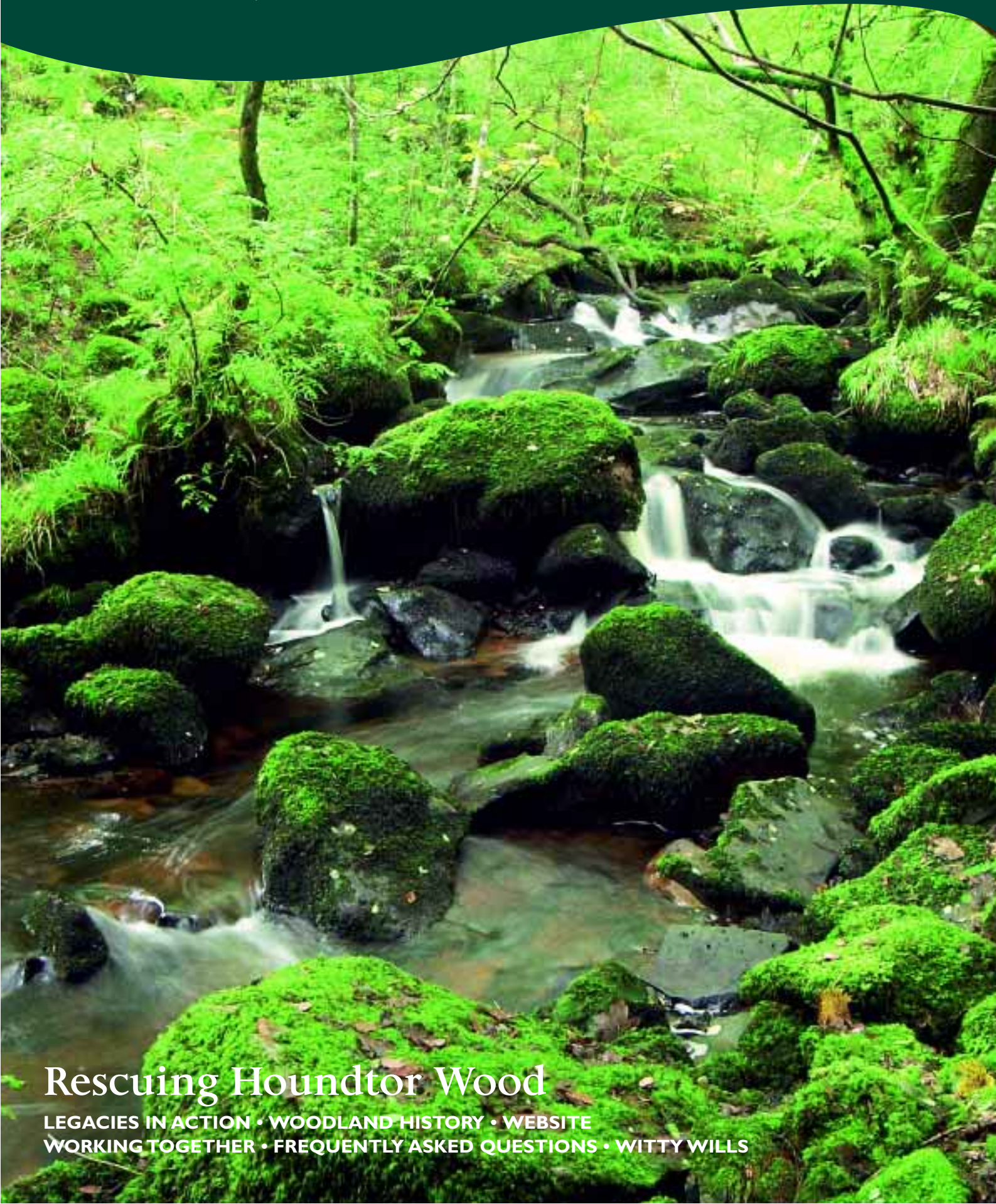


Living Heritage



WOODLAND
TRUST

The Woodland Trust legacy newsletter • No 4 • February 2003



Rescuing Houndtor Wood

LEGACIES IN ACTION • WOODLAND HISTORY • WEBSITE
WORKING TOGETHER • FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS • WITTY WILLS



Houndtor Wood

FOTO 45/Stuart Handley

'Only 2% of Britain is now covered with ancient woodland,... Many species are left clinging to tiny fragments of ancient woodland not really large enough to support the fragile ecosystems that are vital to their survival.'

A priceless gift

Houndtor Wood rises up dramatically into the landscape of Dartmoor surrounded by beauty. Set in Devon's Bovey Valley, there are stunning views of the rocky, babbling river below and the shady woods rich in wildlife and ancient trees. Two of these neighbouring woods are also owned by the Woodland Trust and, together, Houndtor, Pullabrook and Hisley Woods make a natural haven of international importance.

The recent acquisition of Houndtor Wood had the Trust's conservation experts buzzing with enthusiasm. James Mason, Woodland Officer explains why.

'With Pullabrook and Hisley Woods nearby, gaining Houndtor Wood would give us the chance to protect more than 200 acres, completing the final piece in a much larger jigsaw of internationally important conservation sites.'

For a charity, finding the funds for such purchases is never easy. Thankfully, help came along in the form of the Heritage Lottery Fund, public donations and, crucially, three generous legacies from Mrs D M Harris, Miss P E F Heal and Mr L V Ratcliffe. Houndtor Wood is now safely in the hands of the Woodland Trust but the story does not end there.

All three woods had previously fallen

victim to a practise common in the 1960s – the felling of native broadleaf trees to plant commercial non-native conifers. This had a devastating effect, blocking out the light and suffocating much of the wildlife. Restoration has begun at Hisley



European otter

Stefan Baltus

and Pullabrook. The conifers are being gently thinned and the broadleaf species such as oak and ash nurtured.

The greatest threat to wildlife is the loss of habitat. Ancient woodland is the richest of all the UK's natural habitats, but only 2% of Britain is now covered with ancient woodland, which was once widespread across the land. Many species are left clinging to tiny fragments of ancient woodland not really large enough to support the fragile ecosystems

that are vital to their survival.

All species need living room and with the right amount of space they will thrive.

'We are already seeing the results at Hisley and Pullabrook. Many conifers are gone and the light is pouring in and giving life' said James. 'At the moment, Houndtor is really dark but it won't be long before the same is happening there.'

The sooner the better. Ancient woodland does not generally have long-lived seedbanks so it is vital to start restoration as soon as possible.

James is confident that this rescue is not too late. 'It will take a while but, in time, my guess is that it'll become incredibly special with rare species like the high brown and pearl bordered fritillary butterfly moving in.' These rare butterflies are just two of many hundreds of species likely to benefit. Because of the abundance of rich habitat in the area there are all kinds of flora and fauna poised to colonise the wood when the conditions are right.

All this is possible because of the forethought of Houndtor's benefactors. It is difficult to imagine how a legacy could be better spent.

A life's work

Bluebell WTPL Wild service tree Alex von Koettlitz Autumn colours Faye Lawrence Frosty leaves WTPL/EA | janes



'I love the changing seasons. The bluebells in spring, the leaf colours in autumn and a wood is the most beautiful place to go when the snow falls.'

Sid Candler has been working with wood for over 60 years. Through it, he has made his living and almost all the furniture in his house.

Sid finds his job extremely satisfying. 'The beauty of wood is that it's a changing material,' he says. 'It's not like brass or other materials where the colour stays basically the same whatever you do with it; wood alters its appearance as you work with it. You carve one bowl and it'll look totally different to another because of the way the rings fall.'

At the age of 75 he is still a craftsman and has recently created a seven feet wide ornate bureau made almost entirely of oak provided by the Woodland Trust. He is soon to embark on another made of cherry which will need to be just as large in order to house his extensive collection of Royal Doulton jugs.

Because of his love of wood and woodland, Sid plans to leave both his

jugs and his Essex home to the Trust.

'I can't think of anything better to do with my legacy. The tranquillity of woodland is like nothing else. It's one of the few places where you can escape from this crowded world. I love the changing seasons. The bluebells in spring, the leaf colours in autumn and a wood is the most beautiful place to go when the snow falls.'

But his enjoyment of woodland is clouded by his concerns for the future.

'If you look in the countryside today, you see so many trees being knocked down. It's only now we're losing them that we're becoming aware of their value.'

Sid Candler is able to allay his fears by leaving a legacy to the Trust. With his pledge, and others like it, the Trust can plan for a future where it continues to nurture and protect these remarkable places that give so many people so much pleasure.

Pledger questionnaire

In February 2002, we sent confidential questionnaires to those who have kindly told us that they will be remembering the Woodland Trust in their Will. We think it's very important that supporters have opportunities to express their views, it helps us to improve membership services and thereby protect more woodland, so thank you to the large number who took the time to reply. Rest assured that your views will be informing what we do in the future.

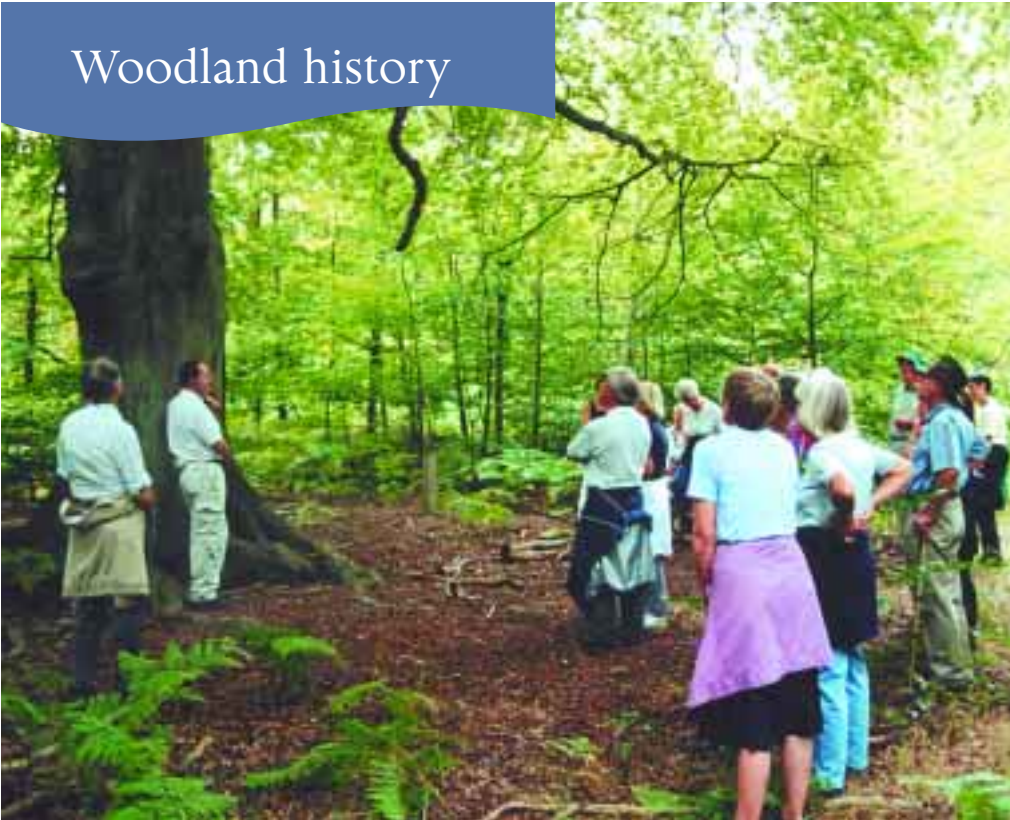
One of the questions was about this newsletter and we were delighted by the overwhelmingly positive response. Interesting and relevant articles were liked the best and hopefully this issue reflects this. Several people also commented that they would like *Living Heritage* to be available via the Internet or e-mail. With the new website just completed, we will now look at adding an electronic version of *Living Heritage*.

Quick wit

'A woman mourner was horrified when her best hat was buried with the coffin at a South African funeral – she had planned to wear it to a cocktail party later in the day, but an undertaker mistook it for a floral tribute.' *Weekend*

*Yet, if you enter the woods
On a summer evening late,
When the night-air cools on the trout-
ringed pools
Where the otter whistles his mate,
(They fear not men in the woods,
Because they see so few.)
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew
The old lost road through the woods.*

The way through the woods
Rudyard Kipling



The storyteller at Penn Wood

WTPL/Chris Stanley

The storyteller

Penn Wood in Buckinghamshire is one of Britain's last remaining large areas of ancient woodland. It has an intriguingly rich history, with the local people repeatedly fighting to keep their rights of access since before the eleventh century. Late last summer, the Trust invited members to visit the wood, hear its fascinating story and find out how legacies played a vital part in its dramatic rescue.

Many of us have not sampled the delights of storytelling since childhood. Perhaps that is why the Trust was overwhelmed by the response to its' invitation and had to lay on an extra day to meet demand. Over three fine days, more than 100 people heard its story colourfully and creatively interpreted by a professional storyteller.

Penn Wood's most recent history is perhaps the most intriguing. In 1993, planning permission was sought for the

ancient wood to be developed into a golf course. This signalled the start of a six year battle to save it. The Woodland Trust and local groups launched an urgent £1 million appeal to purchase the wood. By April 1999, this incredible target was met through a combination of grants and public generosity. Legacies provided a vital contribution of over £200,000.

Penn Wood's future is now certain, nurtured by the Trust to ensure it remains a welcoming place for people and wildlife. The members that visited last summer truly appreciated the rescued wood when they were treated to a guided walk taking in its historic features and natural beauty. The feedback from each day was extremely positive and there are vital new legacy pledges in the pipeline as a result. More days like these are planned – there are many other stories waiting to be told.

Quick wit

'The marriage suffered a setback in 1965 when the husband was killed by the wife.' *New Law Journal*

Question

I would like to leave my 20 acres of mature wood which I have cherished for the last 45 years to the Woodland Trust. I wish it to be open to the public for recreational purposes after my death. Is this possible?

Answer

We are no longer able to take on all sites offered and sites are only accepted by exception. Currently, we are targeting our resources towards protecting substantial blocks of ancient woodland under threat together with new woodland creation in order to link and buffer existing ancient woodland core areas.

Should we accept your generous offer we would do all we could to satisfy any specific request you may have made regarding the gift but, unfortunately, it is not always practical for many reasons. For example – the maintenance of the wood may be prohibitively expensive or the policies of the Woodland Trust at the time of your death might prevent acceptance of the gift. We would suggest leaving the land or property to us to deal with in whatever way the Woodland Trust feels is appropriate at the time. A new leaflet giving more detailed information about gifts including gifts of woodland or other land is available from the legacy team.

Website

If you have access to the Internet – why not visit our new legacies website at www.legacies.org.uk and see real examples of how legacies of all sizes are helping to protect and save our native woodland for future generations. In the last two years alone, without legacy income, more than 225,000 trees may not have been planted, and many hundreds of acres left unprotected.

This brand new section of the Woodland Trust website also provides comprehensive information about Will making and why it is so important – simply explaining the process and translating complex legal language into plain English.

Please let us know what you think of the site. We've built in a feedback form and welcome your comments.

www.legacies.org.uk

FIVE STUNNING WOODS

Legacies continue to make a tremendous difference to the UK's woods. Here we spotlight five stunning woods whose acquisition, care and protection was only made possible because of those who remembered the Trust in their Wills.



△ An Arthurian Legend

According to legend, King Arthur encountered a 'monstrous man' at Tarn Wadling Wood in Cumbria. In the fourteenth century it provided commoners with vital access to water their animals. Thanks to a generous bequest, this historic sanctuary is safe for many generations to come.



△ A beautiful restoration

Set in the stunning Wye Valley, Beaulieu Wood links with other precious ancient woods nearby to create a vast safe oasis for a unique variety of wildlife. Now, the Trust can gradually remove the foreign conifers that are stifling the wood's native treasures, helping it to thrive once more.



▷ A haven for the future

By acquiring Glen Sherup in the Ochil Hills, Perth and Kinross, we have taken on a hugely ambitious task, aiming to totally transform the barren landscape. By planting 600,000 native trees, we are changing 1,500 acres from over-grazed grassland into a haven for numerous species like black grouse, spotted flycatcher and the pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly.



▽ Fragrant and full of character

Preston Spring Wood lies high in the Yorkshire Dales commanding spectacular views of the village of Preston Under Scar and the hills beyond. Local people believe that the word 'Scar' refers to the wood itself. We will restore this gem which already contains fragrant thyme, wild strawberry and violet as well as many characterful, gnarled trees adored by the resident woodpeckers.



◁ A waterside wilderness

In 1992, Trenant Wood in Cornwall became our 500th acquisition. Ten years on, we care for over 1,100 woods including a new piece of land which extends this site. Now the wildlife within can spread and flourish and residents of the nearby ancient fishing village of Looe gain improved access. This wonderful wood lies within a steep valley affording breathtaking views of the river at its foot.





Ladybirds

WTPL/Peter Paice

Working together

In the biggest combined effort of its kind in the UK, the Woodland Trust has joined forces with almost 90 other charities to raise awareness about donations to good causes in Wills. "Remember A Charity" is designed to change attitudes, and spread the message that "everyone can leave the world a better place".

Currently, 67% of people in the UK support charities with their money or time – but only 4% actually mention a charity in their Will.

Too many people still die intestate

(without a Will). Many don't update their Wills regularly because they don't realise that, for instance, getting married or re-marrying can make their whole Will invalid. Without a valid Will wishes may not be carried out and the wrong people – or the State – might benefit. But it costs relatively little to make or update a Will, and people can include a tax-free donation to their favourite charity at the same time.

Question

I would like to leave a legacy to the Woodland Trust but I would prefer it to be used to buy woodland in my home county. Can you please tell me if this type of gift would be of interest to the Trust?

Answer

We are always extremely grateful for any legacy, however, it is sometimes difficult to comply with conditions attached. If the legacy is condition free the Woodland Trust will be able to use it in the best way to support our conservation priorities at the time of your death. You may like to provide a side letter to your Will letting us have your thoughts and wishes on how you would prefer your legacy to be used if possible. The Woodland Trust will then be able to consider the options available at the appropriate time. If a legacy has a condition attached to it that we are unable to satisfy then, regretfully, the Trust may not be able to benefit from your generous gift at all.

Contacts

Remembering the Woodland Trust in your Will really will make a difference. It is a gift that will go on growing for centuries to come and help change the face of the countryside for the better. Why not have a look at our simple guide by visiting our website at www.legacies.org.uk or ask for a copy

of our free comprehensive brochure.

If you are considering leaving a specific item, for example a gift of land or woodland, paintings or jewellery, we have a new dedicated gifts leaflet which we would be pleased to send you.

To receive the brochure or gifts leaflet or to get in touch with one of the legacy team please:

Call the legacy team on:

01476 581129 or 581151

E-mail: legacies@woodland-trust.org.uk

Write to: The Legacy Team, The Woodland Trust, Autumn Park, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL

Use the contact forms on our website at: www.legacies.org.uk

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