

# Safe Routes to schools

Scotland

Winter 2008 Issue 12



Cycling Scotland

## First Cycle Friendly School scrubs up

A Midlothian primary's commitment to cycling has made it Scotland's first Cycle Friendly School

To recognise Rosewell Primary becoming Scotland's first Cycle Friendly School, the Scottish Government passed a motion of congratulations.

The Midlothian primary was feted by its local authority, councillors and Rhona Brankin MSP, who attended a special assembly to celebrate the award with the 51 children.

Launched in April 2008 by Cycling Scotland, the Cycle Friendly School (CFS) initiative supports and celebrates primary schools which create and sustain a whole-school cycling culture and identifies all the elements, initiatives and sources of support for schools to achieve the award.

Rosewell has been working on environmental and health awareness for the past two years. Eco-schools co-ordinator and P1 and P2 teacher Gudrid Low said: "Compared to some awards, this was extremely straightforward for us."

"We'd done so much already around eco-schools and healthy living – that's the way things are going nowadays – that we'd done pretty much everything on the CFS checklist, which was easy to fill in too."

The primary had gone the extra mile erecting signs towards its cycle parking and advertising that a toolkit and bike locks are available.

Head Teacher Karen Souter said: "The children have come up with a cycling code and, besides cycling training and maintenance

sessions, we run a cycling club. It's so popular that parents from outlying areas drive the children and their bikes to the village and let them cycle the last stretch."

A sale of reconditioned bikes at Lasswade High has contributed to high levels of cycle ownership at Rosewell. This in turn has helped its drop in car use from 73 to 54 per cent over the past year.

What's the uptake of CFS across the authority? "We've another submission going through and a few more schools are applying," said Midlothian Council's School Travel Co-ordinator Gillian Bathgate. "The award helps us identify schools which have measures in place and those which need extra support and funding."

Cycling Scotland's Lindsay Brunton helped develop the award: "We've been impressed with the number of schools who have made real progress in promoting cycling to their pupils and who will achieve Cycle Friendly School status in the coming year."

"Rosewell Primary's success shows the culture change that can be achieved. We hope it will inspire other schools," she said.

More on Rosewell Primary's celebrations on page 3.

To apply online go to [www.cyclingscotland.org.uk](http://www.cyclingscotland.org.uk) or e-mail [lindsaybrunton@cyclingscotland.org.uk](mailto:lindsaybrunton@cyclingscotland.org.uk) or call 0141 229 5353.



## Foreword

Welcome to *Safe Routes to School Newsletter*.

It's always heartening to hear how Sustrans' sustainable travel projects support each other. What's more, the inspiring results from schools in rural areas, where journeys are often longer and car dependency is higher, show what is possible.

A recent evaluation of Sustrans' work with Scottish schools proved the value of the School Travel Team to schools, parents and local authorities. Now, Scottish resources have been distributed to school travel advisers in England, and Sustrans colleagues in Northern Ireland have learnt from Bike It officers working in England and Wales.

The next step is for us to take the best from our different projects and add them together, working ever more closely with our partners in local authorities, health and environmental organisations.

Malcolm Shepherd  
Chief Executive

## Spic and span for Aggie



Cycling Scotland

**Aggie MacKenzie and Elgin Academy S2 pupil and Travel Committee member Laura McFarlane open the high school's new bike lockers**

Queen of clean Aggie MacKenzie swapped rubber gloves for cycling mitts when she wheeled into Kinloss Primary School to ask: "How clean is your bike shed?"

The local authority school travel team secured the services of *How Clean is Your House?* star Aggie after she volunteered to promote cycling in the area while riding in the Kingussie Bikeathon.

Her visit coincided with Bike Week 2008, so School Travel Co-ordinator Chris Thompson had plenty of ideas to harness her high profile.

First was judging the Ship Shape Cycle Storage competition. Entries came in from all over Moray, but after giving shortlisted Kinloss

Primary's decorated sheds a once over in person, Aggie declared it the winner, and handed over a £1,200 voucher for bikes from Halfords.

Rothiemurchus-born Aggie, who's cycled regularly for the last 20 years, also opened Elgin Academy's new bike lockers. Not to check for dust but to add to the high school's work to promote cycling as the cool way to school.

The local and regional press covered Aggie's appearances, helping raise the profile of cycling a little higher.

More from [chris.thompson@moray.gov.uk](mailto:chris.thompson@moray.gov.uk)



East Dunbartonshire Council

**Every East Dunbartonshire primary school has an STP: Craigdhu pupils show Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson how theirs will help minimise their carbon footprint**

## Quiz the Minister

It's not often Government Ministers are willing to be grilled by tomorrow's electorate. But Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change Stewart Stevenson proved the exception when East Dunbartonshire celebrated all its 36 primary schools publishing School Travel Plans (STPs).

The Minister put himself in the firing line as guest speaker at the celebration. Alongside a number of councillors, teachers and council officers, he congratulated the 80 children present on getting involved in securing the STPs and improving their journey to school.

"How can we stop parents parking on the zig-zags?" asked the children, unfazed by the presence of a Government Minister. "What's the most common greenhouse gas?" and "Some say it's too dangerous to walk to school. What do you think?"

The Minister explained the benefits of active travel, the effects of greenhouse gases and talked how he travelled to school as a child. He also revealed that since walking to work, he'd lost weight.

The day went to the children, in particular those who gave presentations on their involvement in the STP process. While Lenzie Moss Primary pupils sang its travel committee's lyrics 'Cycling to school' to the tune of Village People's YMCA.

For more contact [chris.harvey@eastdunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:chris.harvey@eastdunbarton.gov.uk)



*Transglobal cyclist Mark Beaumont strikes a pose on Clydebank's 3.5metre-tall steel bike, before striking out to visit local primary schools*

## Steel wheels revealed

A giant steel bike on the banks of the Forth and Clyde Canal has been unveiled by round the world cyclist Mark Beaumont.

Mark took time out from preparing for his next global circumnavigation to unveil Bankies Bike, as it's to be known, to promote Clydebank's cycle routes and to spread the safe cycling message to local school children.

At Our Holy Redeemer Primary in Clydebank and at Dalreoch Primary in Dumbarton, Mark – who knocked three months off the record for the 18,000-mile trip – swapped cycling notes with P6 and P7 pupils undergoing cycle training. They were full of questions about his trip, his preparations and how he got into cycling.

Depute Head of Our Holy Redeemer Primary Gillian Hone, felt Mark's presence had a lot of value. "This isn't a wealthy area of Glasgow, so to give kids a chance to see someone famous is superb. He was a lovely ambassador for his country, and made the children think: 'I could do that – I could be a cyclist'."

Mark, who at 12 years old got his cycling proficiency badge and then pedalled solo from Dundee to Oban, said: "It's brilliant to see the regeneration of the canal and further development of cycle paths. Hopefully the installation of the Bankies Bike will encourage all ages to get on their own bikes."

More from [lynn.mcadam@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:lynn.mcadam@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

## Get great press

These schools have spread the word about what they're doing. Why not grab your share of the limelight by celebrating what you do? Here's how.

- Invite your local media to an event with a photocall. It should give an attention-grabbing, but clear account of what'll happen and a contact name and number.
- Send the release three or four days before the event and follow it up with a phone call. For papers that can't come, take pictures on the day. Write a press release, spelling out who, what, where why and when, and send it out with a note that photos are available.

If you're really stuck, contact Sustrans' Press Office on **0117 927 7555** or [press@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:press@sustrans.org.uk)

## Primary gets a Parliamentary motion

Performing rap songs for a Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) was among the celebrations surrounding Rosewell Primary's (see cover story) presentation of Scotland's first Cycle Friendly School award.

The presence of MSP Rhona Brankin, councillors and local authority directors reinforced the importance placed by the Scottish Government on children's health and safety – underpinned by £10m Tackling the School Run funding.

In front of dozens of parents and pupils, the school received the first ever award of Cycle Friendly School status from Cycling Scotland's Chief Executive Erl Wilkie.

The packed hall was relayed a message from the Scottish Parliament that was raised by local MSP Ian McKee. It read:

"The Parliament congratulates Rosewell Primary School, Midlothian, on its success and good example in being the first school in Scotland to be awarded the Cycle Friendly School Award."

Midlothian Council also sent congratulations and an invitation for the children to visit the council chambers.

Affirming their commitment to cycling, the children went outside for some Dr Bike and skills sessions in the playground, as well as lending an artistic hand to designing CFS posters.

More from [lindsaybrunton@cyclingscotland.org.uk](mailto:lindsaybrunton@cyclingscotland.org.uk)



*Cycling Scotland's Chief Executive Erl Wilkie cheers with the children that Rosewell Primary is Scotland's first Cycle Friendly School*

# All aboard Moray's bike scheme

An innovative bike scheme is getting more cycling role models into schools



*Burghead Primary teachers Janet Cornall and Sandra Kelly try out a loan tandem with a view to lift sharing - by bike!*



*Your commute might not be as scenic as Active Schools Coordinator Hein Mijzen's route along the Moray Firth, but give it a go!*

Passers-by might double take at Active Schools Coordinator Hein Mijzen pedalling a trailer full of cycle helmets along the Moray coast road. Or if they glimpse a stack of trombones towed by peripatetic Music Teacher Alistair Grant

These biking role models are among 50 teachers, Active Schools Coordinators and council employees who have signed up to Moray Council's staff bike scheme, co-funded by Hitrans, the region's transport partnership. Council employees can loan a top-of-the-range bicycle, or go 50/50 on a purchase.

Carriers, panniers or even trailers can be loaned with or without a scheme bike. "This year we're hoping to get some loan waterproofs branded with our Travel Champions logo," said School Travel Co-ordinator Chris Thompson.

## 1,400 miles in six months

Hein Mijzen's bike arrived in March 2008 and by mid September he'd stacked up 1,400 miles. His cluster of eight primary schools is strung along 12 miles of coast. With a little planning, he leaves his car at home three or four days a week.

With Scotland's second lowest rainfall and a gently undulating coastal plain, Moray is cycle-friendly country. "This means we have a broad base of cyclists going into schools," said Chris Thompson. "If you get the head cycling, that sets the tone – take Elgin Academy's Head Teacher Margaret Cowie who's supporting high levels of cycling in the high, and also in feeder primaries."

Head Teacher Arlene Wilson covers 16 miles a day on a loaned electric bike. Her 40-minute uphill ride to Dallas Primary has her

pedalling and pushing to get there. "This bike gives me a really enjoyable workout in the fresh air without me noticing," she said. "My colleague who lives in the same town, is getting an electric bike too – we can have staff meetings en route!"

For the last 20 years, Norman Geekie has cycled ten miles a day to and from Milnes High School in Fochabers. The computing teacher now uses a road bike and panniers from the scheme for his books and laptop.

## Cultural shift

"We need a cultural shift before more people include this sort of exercise into their routines," says Moray's Active Schools Manager and Bike Scheme Member John McMulkin.

"I cycle three miles to the office to counter a sedentary job. Others might prefer to walk or get off the bus at an earlier stop."

The innovative bike scheme is cultivating role models, cutting car use and supporting nearly 50 healthy individuals.

For more on Moray's bike scheme, contact [chris.thompson@moray.gov.uk](mailto:chris.thompson@moray.gov.uk)

## Hein's top tips for commuting by bike:

- Be practical
- Have a bike that does the job
- Carry a towel and spare clothing
- Plan ahead
- Enjoy the freedom, fitness and fresh air!

# Choose Another Way



Sustrans

The graphics are as clear as the guidance the website provides

A clear-cut guide for schools which are poised to pull together a School Travel Plan (STP) has been launched.

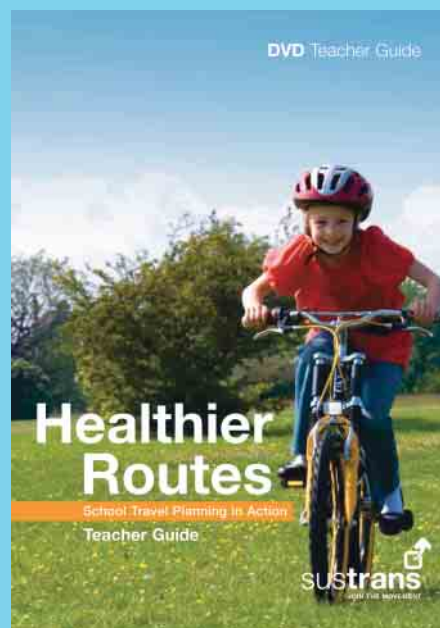
Choose Another Way is a Scottish Government website for travel planning. The schools section within it has a fool-proof guide to producing and maintaining an STP that will support sustainable school travel choices.

The STP process is broken down into four attainable steps,

illustrated with flow charts and action plans. So whether they're rural or urban, secondary or special needs, small or huge, schools should find this a one-stop shop to start and sustain the plan.

Hard copies have been distributed to schools and local authorities across Scotland. For a hard copy tel 0131 539 8128 or e-mail [schools-scotland@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:schools-scotland@sustrans.org.uk). To download a copy, go to [www.chooseanotherway.com/schools.html](http://www.chooseanotherway.com/schools.html) or [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

# New teacher and pupil guide



Summarising Sustrans' DVD and offering guidance for classroom use, the guides can be downloaded too

Teachers and pupils have a new guide each to support the use of Sustrans' school travel DVD.

The 'Healthier Routes: School Travel Planning in Action' DVD was launched in September 2007 to help schools overcome barriers to school travel.

The new guides summarise the DVD's contents, suggests how to use it in school, looks at the basics of creating a School Travel Plan, as well as pointing out useful resources.

The guides were introduced to teachers at the Scottish Learning Festival in September 2008 and are available as a download.

Download the *DVD Teacher's Guide* and the *DVD Pupil's Guide* from [www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk)  
For hard copies or more information, e-mail [schools-scotland@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:schools-scotland@sustrans.org.uk)

# Making Tracks



Sustrans

Sustrans' new newsletter for young people by young people is a chance for them to see their names and their activities in the headlines.

As it says on the cover, *Tracks* is 'a magazine for young people, by young people, with the odd thing by old people'.

So, any old people who know of any young people who've done something interesting about active school travel, please ask them to shout about it to *Tracks*.

For an idea of what's needed, please call Alistair Goulding (you can call him Al) on 0117 915 0106 or email [alistair.goulding@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:alistair.goulding@sustrans.org.uk)

# Pick up the latest stats and facts

Schools can pick up the latest school travel statistics and contact details to inform new or existing School Travel Plans. They are on two new, free information sheets:

- **Scottish Resource List** gives contact details of some 30 organisations able to help set up and support sustainable school travel initiatives
- **Scottish Facts and Figures** delivers what it says: the latest facts and figures to support Scottish school travel initiatives.

Download from the resources section of [www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk) or, for more information or to order hard copies, e-mail [schools-scotland@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:schools-scotland@sustrans.org.uk)

# Walking bus overtakes car use

Car journeys to a school in West Lothian have been slashed by 75 per cent in the three years since two walking buses were set up by parents.

Williamston Primary used to be plagued by 200 cars backing up in its entrance cul de sac and out onto the busy main road. The parents whose nerves jangled at navigating queuing cars find mornings less stressful now as they drop their children off at the walking bus's safe collection points, prior to a ten-minute walk.

In tandem with other school travel ideas involving school buses, some 130 children from a roll of 500 are registered on two walking buses. One bus starts at a suburban train station which has a safe drop off bay, and the other is a 15-minute walk away from school and has a second pick up point, a five-minute stroll from school.

The buses were set up by parents Sharon Campbell and Linda Halliday in consultation with the school and West Lothian council, which verified their routes for insurance purposes.

## Walkers reward

Between 20 and 30 registered walkers in local authority-funded high-vis vests stride out daily. The school has supported the buses with a 10-week reward initiative of cinema tickets for the class that walked the most, and a torch for all walkers. In addition, a programme of after school activities means that parents arrive at staggered times in the afternoon to collect pupils from school.

Linda and Sharon are considering setting up another, informal walking bus in the spring, when they'll also look at a cycling bus to support the school's 75 regular bikers.

"We're trying to sort out the logistics at the moment," said Linda. "It's a lot of work, but the school's support has helped make the buses a success. We've taught the children they don't need the car and Sharon and I feel proud of that."

*Dark mornings are brighter for children who take the walking bus*



Williamston Primary School

# Safety first at Oldmachar



Oldmachar High School

*A breath of fresh air, some exercise and a decongested school entrance are some of the improvements to mornings at Oldmachar*

**A leaflet campaign, new logo, a Powerpoint presentation to parents and a website have helped establish new park and stride arrangements for an Aberdeen secondary school.**

Oldmachar High School decided a safe alternative to keeping cars away from its congested entrance was to set up a park and stride zone in a neighbouring health and leisure centre's car park.

To prepare for it, pupils designed a park and stride logo (see right) to go on car stickers and information leaflets. Parents were invited to view the pupils' Powerpoint presentation, also screened at assemblies, and information was uploaded onto the school website.

In spring this year, a parking zone was allocated in the health and leisure centre's shared car park. A walkway was marked across a traffic-calming ramp and new steps were built in car parking spaces on the school grounds.

On the first day, teachers and senior pupils in high-vis vests directed traffic to set in place the safe procedure which parents and pupils have kept up. "It has been successfully communicated and implemented," said Depute Head Teacher Shelagh Bain.

Head Girl and park and stride user Amanda Reid said she welcomes a blast of fresh air before class. "The system is so much safer than before, and it's still going fine. Everyone got used to it quickly because it was well-communicated."

For more detail contact [dhaggarty@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:dhaggarty@aberdeencity.gov.uk)



# STP on DVD is OK

DVDs, graffiti and even a puppet show – Aberdeenshire schools are cutting a creative dash when it comes to drawing parents’ attention to their School Travel Plans (STPs).

Longside Primary School



*New pupils and their parents take in key messages from Longside Primary’s STP on DVD*

Understanding the need to get parents on board with its STP, Longside School near Peterhead has focussed on new media to drive the STP message home.

Using digital cameras, its Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) have merged animation, film, artwork and a script, to create a take-home DVD that puts across key messages of Longside’s STP.

“Our JRSOs have presented safe school travel, eco and health issues in an

accessible way,” said Head Teacher Dorothy Simpson. “In time we will review and update the DVD, but at the moment our new P1 and nursery pupils and their parents have been watching it as part of their induction.”

### DVD format accepted

Aberdeenshire’s School Travel Planning Officer Aurelie Irving accepted Longside’s STP in DVD format because of two years’ travel work already completed. Where there is plenty of evidence of an STP in action as there is at Longside, Aurelie says she’s open-minded about the format in which it is actually published.

“Where schools have minor travel issues, their STP will be more about sustaining existing levels of active travel, so this sort of presentation works well: pupils can do it themselves and take stronger ownership of their STP;” she said.

Kintore School is preparing a puppet show to convey its travel issues and the pupils

will invite the local community to see it. “Because it will tie in with the school’s paper STP, the messages will be shared with family and friends,” said Aurelie.

### Graffiti board

Graffiti in a rural school is sure to stand out. At Ordiquhill School near Banff, a huge STP graffiti board on the school wall will spell out its safe travel messages and be the first thing parents see as they arrive.

While near Turriff, calendars featuring a different aim of King Edward School’s STP every month, are to be sold to the community. The message will go beyond the immediate school family – and raise funds too.

Getting parents in step with their children’s safe and active school travel habits is key to every STP’s success, says Aurelie. Sending the messages home is a stride forward.

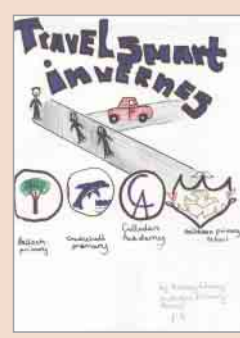
For more ideas and detail, contact [aurelie.irving@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:aurelie.irving@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

## Pupils urge TravelSmart take up

TravelSmart



*Artwork from Duncan Forbes Primary was chosen to brighten the map of the local area*



### Walking, cycling and public transport use have rocketed in Inverness after local pupils urged households to use a new travel service.

Some 1,500 homes in East Inverness were offered the chance to boost their active travel by the TravelSmart team. Supported by Sustrans and The Highland Council, Junior Road Safety Officers from four local primaries wrote to households in their catchments, asking them to travel leaner and greener. Followed up by phone calls from TravelSmart advisors, 94 per cent of the target population was contacted, and nearly half asked for personalised packs of information, rewards and incentives to help them on their way.

Maps of the local area featuring P6 and P7 artwork, together with information on walking, cycling and public transport, were distributed by staff on foot and by bike working from a local field office.

A detailed evaluation of the project, conducted earlier this year and funded by the Scottish Government, showed big increases in use of sustainable travel modes across the target population: walking up by 22 per cent, cycling up by 27 per cent and public transport up by 11 per cent. As a result car trips were reduced by 13 per cent, saving almost one million car km per year.

More on TravelSmart from [lynn.marshall@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:lynn.marshall@sustrans.org.uk) or from the Sustrans Projects section of [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

# Footpaths step up cycling in Dunbar

A £200,000 upgrade of footpaths in Dunbar has led to a five per cent hike in cycling and a five per cent drop in car use by the town's primary school pupils.



*Dunbar Primary's bike shed indicates the popularity of cycling to school*

An informal network of paths links the town, its high and primary schools and health centre with the suburb of Hallhill, via two tunnels beneath the East Coast mainline railway. But rather than use the paths, many Hallhill residents preferred to drive the circuitous route to school.

Using a £97,000 grant allocated by Sustrans from the Tackling the School Run fund, plus money from the local authority and a nearby supermarket, the path network has been widened for two-way traffic, resurfaced and lit properly. The primary school playground now has covered cycle parking for 40 bikes – now full to bursting with the five per cent rise in cycling – and a Toucan crossing gives safer access to the remodelled school entrance.

A hands-up survey at Dunbar Primary showed:

- 78 per cent of its 860 pupils were questioned
- 98 per cent walked or cycled to school
- in a 12 month period, cycling went up five per cent and car use down five per cent.

"We're finding P1 and P2 pupils from Hallhill are cycling along the footpaths with their parents who now regard it as safe," said Area Network Officer Colin Baird from East Lothian Council. "We're pleased with the effect the work is having on the community."

For more contact [ireid@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:ireid@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## 6,000 bikes secure at schools



*Minipod cycle stands are capturing the imagination and channelling enthusiasm for cycling at nursery schools*

Over £1.1 million has been spent on securing cycle storage for 6,000 bikes in 250 Scottish schools in the last 12 months.

Between May 2007 and March 2008, Sustrans has funded 1,541 individual racks, together with 151 individual cycle lockers and 266 covered cycle shelters and compounds.

A less common bike stand has boosted pedalling to Houston Nursery. Designed for scooters, trikes and bikes for very young children, the Minipod has helped persuade between 10 and 20 per cent of the 80 pupils to bring their wheels to school. Staff also report a 25 per cent increase in pupils playing with the nursery's own bikes also stored on a Minipod.

One pupil said: "The Minipods are good because they look like rockets."

Funding for the Minipods and more conventional stands is not rocket science. Local authorities are awarded funding by Sustrans' School Travel Team when their schools submit successful School Travel Plans. The team has allocated over £1.6 million of Scottish Government Tackling the School Run cash to cycle parking since 2007.

## Subscription

The *Safe Routes to Schools Scotland Newsletter* is aimed at transport, health, education and environmental professionals and is published bi-annually as a free resource. To subscribe, contact Sustrans School Travel Information Service by phone, email or via the SRS website. The newsletter can also be downloaded from [www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk)

To submit ideas, news, images and stories for inclusion, email [schools-scotland@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:schools-scotland@sustrans.org.uk)

The School Travel project in Scotland is co-ordinated by Sustrans and is supported by the Scottish Government, Charitable Trusts and Sustrans Supporters.

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity, working on practical projects so people can choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment.

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