

Animal *Health* Trust News



Issue 81 | Autumn 2016

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Blind Roxy regains her sight!

Roxy, a Giant Schnauzer, was four when she bounded into Erica and John Redmond's life. Boisterous, fun and loving; she soon won her way into their hearts. However, earlier this year, at just seven years old, her sight started to deteriorate very quickly and her fun personality also started to fade away.

Out on a walk, she accidentally ploughed into her owner, John, at a full gallop. Roxy was also no longer the first to catch a ball when thrown. Roxy's sight problems became much more life-threatening as she carelessly wandered off a low promenade wall. An immediate appointment with the vet was initially suggestive of an eye infection, but if she got any worse, it was advised Roxy should be referred to a veterinary ophthalmologist for further tests.

The next day, Roxy narrowly missed walking into a tree. That night, she was bumping into furniture. Seriously concerned that her sight was worsening, Erica and John asked their vet to make an appointment at the AHT.

Erica said: "We were very confident this was the right way forward for Roxy. Renata Stavinochova, one of the ophthalmologists there, asked us lots of questions; for instance: Had she eaten anything unusual? Does she drink a lot? Has she had any recent trauma? Has she ever been abroad?"

"We answered as best we could, then Renata examined Roxy's eyes and found severe inflammation and that both of Roxy's retinas were detached. Renata confirmed our worst fears: Roxy was blind in both eyes."

Roxy was kept in for close monitoring and so that the AHT could start diagnostic tests straight away to try to find a cause, or to at least eliminate possible causes and determine the best treatment plan.

Most tests came back negative and often in cases like Roxy's, no underlying cause is ever found. Therefore, the conclusion was drawn that Roxy's retinal lesions were most likely immune-mediated and she was started on a course of steroid tablets and eye drops to suppress the immune response that was attacking her retinas.

Soon Roxy was ready to be discharged to continue her medication at home.

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Kelly, the veterinary ophthalmology nurse, prepared a medication chart for Erica and John to follow and spent time making sure they were comfortable administering the eye drops.

Determined to give Roxy as much care and support as they possibly could, Erica and John set about making some adjustments around the house. This included bubble wrapping furniture so Roxy couldn't bump into it and using perfume to sign post doorways so she could more easily navigate her way around. Erica said: "Against all our expectations, Roxy coped very well around the house and garden. She allowed us to give her eye drops and her pills, without any apparent stress for her.

"The steroids caused muscle wasting so she no longer had the strength to jump into the back of the car, but John made a ramp out of a wardrobe door and a carpet runner! We bought white leads and a harness which said 'Blind Dog', however, this had mixed results as people assumed she was a guide dog! We were due to go away to visit our daughter in the USA but we decided to cancel. There was no way we could leave her with someone else!"



Two weeks later, Roxy was back to the AHT to be re-examined. Although the inflammation had slightly improved, Roxy's retinas were still detached and Roxy was still blind in both eyes. Renata and her supervisor, James Oliver, decided to alter Roxy's medication and start her on a stronger immunosuppressant medication.

"Within a few days we were convinced she could see a little" said Erica. "The clues couldn't all be due to her other senses being heightened. Walking down the road, she saw a man approaching from 50 yards and barked at him! Another time we thought she 'saw' children walk across her vision about 100 yards away, her head moving as they did! We excitedly emailed Renata to tell her the good news, who was pleased, but wanted to see for herself!

"On her next appointment Renata couldn't stop smiling with amazement! Roxy reacted to vision tests positively, not just the left eye, but the right eye too! Proof she could see again!" added Erica. Renata confirmed that Roxy's retinas were reattached and she had regained some vision.

Renata Stavinohova said: "This is truly an interesting and amazing case and we are so pleased for Roxy, Erica and John. When I first saw Roxy she was, understandably, a quiet, subdued dog who was blind and frightened. The change in her now is quite remarkable! I have never seen this side of her before but it is quite obvious that the treatment has worked and Roxy is making fantastic progress."

Erica and John are thrilled: "Her strength has been returning. She no longer requires the ramp for the car and she has more energy. Somehow she is back to her dear self, and we couldn't be more grateful to the staff at the Animal Health Trust for their care and attention throughout this worrying time."

75th Anniversary of the Animal Health Trust



2017 marks 75 years of the Animal Health Trust - the charity fighting disease and injury in animals.

The Animal Health Trust was established in 1942 by Dr Reginald Wooldridge who set out his vision to create a veterinary institute inspired by his unshakeable conviction that animals were caused needless suffering by the failure to diagnose or understand their diseases. His aim was to apply the same advances being made in human medicine through research to veterinary medicine, in order to improve the health and welfare of animals.

This vision still rings true today. The AHT continues to fight disease and injury in animals all over the country and indeed, the world.

To mark the 75th anniversary the AHT will celebrate through a number of special fundraising events, appeals and exciting initiatives. More detail will be available later in the year and throughout 2017 at www.aht.org.uk. We would ask all dedicated supporters to go the extra mile next year by coming to one of our events, signing up for a charity challenge to raise vital funds, or simply supporting the campaigns that will ensure we continue to improve animals' lives for the next 75 years. Thank you.

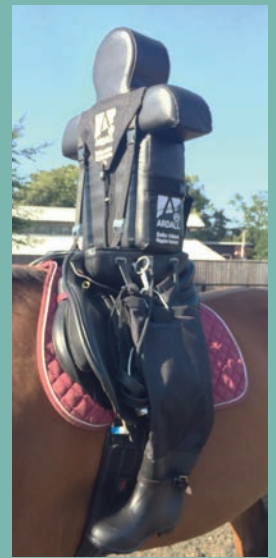
Health & Safety – don't be a dummy!

We're not dummies when it comes to health and safety!

When horses are referred to our Equine Clinic we always like to see them ridden by the owner as they would be at home, to give our Clinicians the full picture to help with their assessment. Some of these horses can show potentially dangerous behaviour when ridden due to the pain they are caused from their injury, causing the owner to lose confidence and therefore willingness to ride. Often these horses, when handled professionally, are manageable and can be safely ridden by our highly proficient riders. However, some are just too dangerous to be assessed whilst being ridden. In these circumstances in the past, we have used a weighted surcingle (a wide belt or girth) which allows us to use a load of approximately 45kg, mimicking the weight of a lightweight rider. This will reproduce some of the clinical signs when the horse is assessed on the lunge and has proved to be of great value.



To help fully replicate the presence of a rider in these more challenging situations, we have recently purchased an Ardall dummy. The dummy can be attached to any saddle and has boots that can be filled with weights. In some horses it is not just the weight of a rider that causes problems; sometimes it is the horse's perception of the rider's upper body towering above it, so the dummy is perfect for a safe assessment. It is also collapsible so that the upper half can be folded down initially and only opened up when the horse is moving confidently.



At the AHT we put welfare and safety first, so this is going to be a useful addition in our diagnostic approach without putting the horse, owner or rider at risk.

Breed health summary identifies major health concerns

Give a Dog a Genome (GDG) aims to use whole genome sequencing technology to build a 'bank' of information that will greatly enhance our geneticists' understanding of the canine genome and the changes in DNA which cause disease. In time, this will enable us to develop new DNA tests for inherited diseases faster, helping generations of animals live healthier lives.



The genome bank will be made up of one set of whole genome sequence data from each of the 75 breeds included in the project at this stage. Before selecting the 75 dogs whose DNA will be sequenced, we've been working closely with each breed to determine their main health concerns through a breed health summary exercise. This will help us select, on a breed by breed basis, DNA that will have the greatest research benefits; for example, DNA from an older, apparently healthy dog or a dog with a known health condition of concern to the breed.

This exercise highlighted epilepsy as the disease of greatest concern to the breeds participating in GDG. This supports the AHT's on-going efforts, currently focused on the Border Collie and Italian Spinone, to identify the genetic mutations likely to be responsible for epilepsy. Epilepsy is a devastating neurological disease that is genetically complex and which can affect dogs differently, making it a challenge to diagnose, treat and prevent.

The second most commonly reported health concern was hereditary cataracts, listed by seven breeds. The AHT has had success launching DNA tests for hereditary cataracts in the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Boston Terrier and French Bulldog in the past and is currently investigating hereditary cataracts in several more breeds, including the Labrador Retriever.

For more information, go to: www.aht.org.uk/gdg

White kittens needed!

We had great fun recently in our small animal centre when we were visited by two litters of Maine Coon kittens who had come in for their routine BAER hearing test.



We're investigating how many white pedigree cats are actually born deaf in the UK (a common phenomenon, but no one really knows how prevalent this is) with the longterm aim of understanding more about the genetics involved.

Myth buster - not all white cats are born deaf.

While we investigate this, we're offering free BAER hearing tests to litters of British Shorthair, Maine Coon, Norwegian Forest, Russian and Turkish Vankedisi kittens where at least one of the litter is completely white. The kittens must be between 9 and 13 weeks old to take part in the study. It is also desirable, but not essential, if the sire and dam's eye colour, coat colour and hearing ability can also be provided to help aid the investigation.

For more information, or to arrange for your litter to take part in the study, please contact, lorenzo.mari@aht.org.uk or julia.freeman@aht.org.uk of the Neurology Department or call, **01638 552 700**.

60 seconds with...

...Camilla Strang - Veterinary Surgeon

How long have you been at the AHT?

Almost a year now! I joined the Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance team in November and work in a combination of roles that includes the veterinary care of our pony herd and advising vets on management and diagnosis of equine infectious diseases.

Before starting here, I completed a Masters in Epidemiology at Imperial College, London. Prior to that, I worked in a busy equine hospital in West Sussex, initially as an intern and on completion, stayed on for a few years working in both a hospital and ambulatory based role.

Why do you do what you do?

The diagnosis and management of disease outbreaks, whether involving a new infectious disease or an endemic infectious disease, is paramount to stopping spread and preventing morbidity and mortality, whether in humans or animals. Working at the AHT has allowed me to put this knowledge into an applied context and work under the experts in this field, whilst combining both my veterinary and newly acquired epidemiology skills to improve the welfare of animals.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

In my spare time, I play hockey and tennis regularly and am contemplating learning how to row. Having just moved to Cambridge, I feel that perhaps this is an essential activity to undertake as a newcomer?! I have a young puppy, an Irish Terrier called Olive, who is keeping me pretty busy and at some point I would also love to have my own horse again. For now, I am taking advantage of borrowing a friend's horse for the occasional fair weather hack!



Zoe Brings It Home - £100,000 for the AHT

One in four dogs will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime and cancer is the leading cause of death in dogs over the age of ten. These are statistics the Zoe's Journey UK fundraising team, founded by Jayne May, from Nailsea, Bristol, desperately want to change.

The 'Zoe Brings It Home, £100,000 for the AHT' campaign is their next big step in the fight against canine cancer and was launched by Mark Labbett "The Beast" from ITV's popular quiz show, *The Chase*. Initially, Jayne set out to raise £5,000 for the AHT, inspired by her own experiences after Zoe, a Golden Retriever, defied the odds and beat lymphoma at age 13.

Zoe continued to live a happy life free from cancer but sadly passed away earlier this year, at almost 15 years of age. Since January 2015 the ZJUK fund for the AHT has raised £69,000, and now, with celebrity support from Mark Labbett, the ZJUK team has committed to raising **£100,000** for the AHT!



Front: Jayne May, her dogs, Whitney and Sophie and Steve Tasker of Watkins and Tasker Vets.

Back: Claire Walkley, Head Nurse at Watkins & Tasker Portishead Practice, Marie-France Vincent of Animal Health Trust, Katie Labbett, Mark Labbett, Pete Williams, (ZJUK), Marilyn Dickens (ZJUK) (front right) and Susan Holloway (ZJUK).

Jayne May said: "Launching the £100k campaign is unbelievable; I never thought we would raise so much. My Zoe survived cancer, and it's only through research that we can find out what makes some dogs different and harness this to one day protect more dogs from cancer. Also, any advances made in cancer research in dogs can also have benefits for humans, so it's even more crucial that we work together to help man's best friend fight this horrible disease."

Mark Labbett has a young Golden Retriever called Baloo and knows first-hand how having a dog can change your life: "We wouldn't be without our dog now so we're happy to support anything that might improve his quality of life in the future, as well as other dogs and that of their families. Dogs give you so much, it's important that we're able to offer them the very best treatment when they need it, and in order to do that, as with humans, you depend on advances being made through scientific research. This is a really worthwhile cause and it's just amazing what they're trying to achieve."

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Zoe's Legacy at the Animal Health Trust

The Animal Health Trust is the only UK charity with a dedicated canine cancer research team and we are putting the Zoe's Journey UK funds towards a new research project into lymphoma, one of the most common canine cancers and the cancer Zoe had.

The donation has also supported on-going research to develop a new prognostic test for vets treating dogs with mast cell tumours, the most common type of skin cancer in dogs. The AHT also has state-of-the-art facilities for treating dogs with cancer in its purpose-built Cancer Centre, which is part of its specialist referral clinic, and trains vets of the future wanting to specialise in veterinary oncology.

Dr Mike Starkey, Head of Molecular Oncology Research at the AHT, said: "There are around 200 different types of cancer that affect dogs. We're currently researching five of the most common malignant cancers in dogs to gain a better understanding of how they develop, how they spread and how they respond to treatment, in order to help vets fight cancer. Jayne has set herself an enormous target but we're confident that she'll make it as she and her team continue to amaze and inspire. This special cause is so very close to her heart and without support from people like her, we wouldn't be able to do our vital research. We're really grateful to Jayne, and everyone that has supported Zoe's Journey UK, for all of their hard work, kindness and continued support."

For more information about Zoe's Journey UK, go to: www.zoesjourneyuk.com

Meet Harvey! Harvey is a seven year old Labrador cross rescue dog and has become somewhat of a regular face for the AHT's chemotherapy nurses.

A year or so ago Harvey's family noticed a tiny lump on his stomach. The lump was removed by their local vet who sent it off for testing. Two weeks later the results came back and confirmed that the lump was a malignant mast cell tumour. Jacqui, Harvey's owner, said: "We were shocked as Harvey is so full of beans and thought it couldn't be anything serious but best to be safe than sorry. Apparently the tumour isn't external as most mast cell tumours are but is under Harvey's skin, which is a little unusual. We were referred for further investigation to the AHT who discovered the cancer had spread to Harvey's lymph glands, so the best treatment to pursue was chemotherapy.

"Harvey had a year of chemo, first weekly, then fortnightly and then monthly. To look at him you wouldn't know there is anything wrong with him and he's continued to live life to the full, he especially still enjoys rolling around in the mud during his walks. Throughout the treatment Harvey showed no side effects and was as lively as ever. We had to make a few alterations around the house, such as making sure Harvey and our cat don't drink out of the same water bowl. The main thing we've noticed is that his fur didn't grow back quite as fast when he was shaved for an ultrasound.



Harvey is now off all drugs



Harvey receiving chemotherapy at the AHT

"The treatment we received from the AHT has been first-class - always keeping us informed and treating both us and Harvey with greatest care. We can't praise all the staff enough and would like to say a very big Thank You!"

Harvey is photographed during one of his last chemotherapy sessions which involves the specific dose of drugs being injected into a vein through a catheter. The patient does not need to be sedated and the whole process is normally over in 10 – 15 minutes. Chemotherapy nurses are required to wear protective clothing when handling cytotoxic drugs, as pictured.

Harvey comes back to the AHT for regular check ups but is now off all drugs and doing really well!

Mast cell tumours, like Harvey's, are just one of the types of cancer we're actively researching at the AHT thanks to vital funding from ZJUK and its supporters. Our cancer research in dogs aims to understand more about which cancers will spread, or respond to treatment, so that vets can make more informed decisions about treatment options and prognosis in the future. We're also looking more closely at certain cancers which appear to be more common in some breeds than others to determine if there are any genetic factors involved, and are currently investigating mast cell tumours in several breeds, including Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers, Boxers, Shar Peis and Weimaraners.

Get Active for the AHT

RideLondon-Surrey 100 is a challenge like no other through the closed roads of London and the Surrey Hills. The event gives 25,000 cyclists the opportunity to ride the 2012 Olympic route without traffic and with masses of spectators. This unique ride is growing year on year in popularity as more and more people turn to cycling, and though places are harder and harder to come by the AHT has secured a number of Golden Bond places. Are you up for the challenge?!

If you're more of a runner than a cyclist, The London Marathon is an iconic event. Our capital shuts down its streets giving runners a once in a lifetime opportunity to run through the cordoned off roads. We currently have limited Golden Bond places available, so contact us quickly for a chance to run! If you have a ballot place and would like to fundraise for the AHT we would also love to hear from you.

If you're ready to take on either of these challenges then email serena.rianjongdee@aht.org.uk or call **07805 428327** for more details.



Jodie White, one of our star Marathon runners from last year, crossing the finish line

Intrepid Trustees!

A big thank you to our wonderful RideLondon-Surrey 100 fundraisers who took on the cycling challenge this year to raise funds for the AHT.

Steve, Caroline, Mike, Jo (pictured), Rob and Becky are obviously not ones to sit back in the saddle, and all furiously pedalled their way around the former Olympic route. Steve Shore, AHT Trustee, and his wife Caroline, headed up the Ride London team for the AHT. Over the years, this super-couple and their teammates have raised over £15,000 by repeatedly taking on the challenge.

We asked Steve what his motivations are for his dedicated commitment and fundraising efforts for the AHT: "The Trust does some amazing things and as anyone who gets to know it finds out it is one of the best kept secrets in the world of animal welfare - but we don't want it to be a secret. My personal involvement is tiny compared to the work of the vets and scientists but I am proud to be involved."



Left to right: Mike Woodcock, Caroline Shore, Jo Parker & Steve Shore



© Claire Borley

Congratulations and thank you to our wonder woman Trustee, Rachel Flynn.

In July, Rachel competed in the 350th running of the Newmarket Town Plate in aid of the AHT. The race is run over three miles, six furlongs of Newmarket's July course. Rachel and her trusty steed, Opera Buff, finished a magnificent fourth, with Rachel saying "What an amazing day and historic occasion. I feel privileged to have been part of it. Huge thanks to everyone who has sponsored me." Rachel's fundraising total keeps growing and growing, currently standing at a magnificent £9,205! Everyone at the AHT is incredibly grateful that we were your chosen charity.

Gala Race Day a huge success despite torrential weather conditions

Thunder, lightning and torrential rain didn't dampen the spirits at the AHT's annual Gala Race Day held at Newmarket's July Course where local riders, business owners, residents and staff from the charity joined together to enjoy a fabulous day's racing which raised more than £40,000 for the charity.

The Charity Race, which was won by 17-year-old Hannah Knowles of Newmarket on her second attempt at the race, provided an exciting addition to the programme of the day. Hannah fought off competition from seven other highly skilled riders to battle her way to victory. Hannah said: "After competing in the race last year, I got such a buzz I knew I wanted to do it again. So to come back and win the race is an amazing feeling. Thank you to the AHT for giving me this opportunity and to John Ryan for letting me ride the fabulous The Gay Cavalier."

Dr Mark Vaudin, Chief Executive of the AHT (pictured left with Hannah), said: "We are extremely grateful to Noel Byrne and the committee of volunteers who generously give their time and energy to organise the event. Over the years that Noel and the Race Day committee has been organising it, the event has raised more than £200,000 for our vital work."



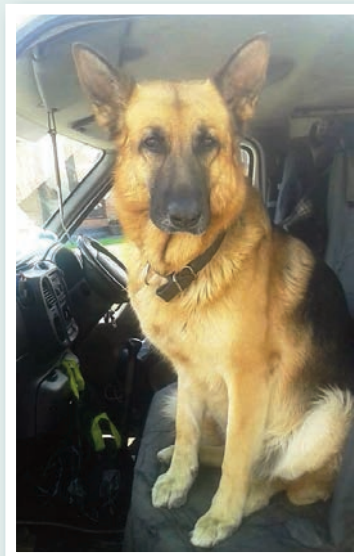
Skydiving for Obi

In December 2015 my six year old German Shepherd Obi was diagnosed with bone cancer (osteosarcoma). Sadly the vets said that there was nothing they could do for him, and in March 2016 my family made the hard decision to put him to sleep so that he was no longer in pain. So when the opportunity came to do a parachute jump I did some research into which charity I wanted to donate my sponsor money too. As the Animal Health Trust is currently researching cancer in dogs I thought it would be the perfect charity. I raised a total of £713 for the AHT!

The parachute jump was amazing but very scary! I jumped from 15,000ft rather than 10,000ft which meant that I was free falling for one minute rather than 30 seconds! I would definitely do it again and I even wanted to go straight back up as soon as my feet hit the floor, much to the panic of my parents!

Losing Obi was one of the most devastating things to have happened to our family, especially my Dad because they went everywhere together. With my Dad being a gardener, Obi was able to join him in his work where all of my Dad's customers would feed Obi bacon sandwiches and play with him whilst my Dad did the garden! He is greatly missed and was the most loyal cheeky best friend anyone could have asked for. Hopefully in the future the AHT, with the help of donations, will find a solution for cancer.

Becky Pearn



Moonlight Colourthon in memory of Woody



In 2015 our much loved Border Collie Woody was diagnosed with a large cancerous tumour. The treatment and support that we received from the AHT was fantastic. Woody was given chemotherapy but unfortunately the cancer had taken hold and had spread into his lungs.

I decided to try and raise as much money as I could to help them to continue with their work so I took on the challenge of an overnight 13 mile walk which we completed despite the torrential rain and thunder storms! Even my daughter Evie walked the first two miles in pouring rain! When asked who she was walking for her reply was "My best friend Woody who has gone to the stars".

Julie Rutter



Evie

A big 'Thank You' to ALL our Fundraisers!

If you would like to take on a challenge on behalf of our charity, or simply want to support the fantastic work that we do, then please visit www.aht.org.uk/fundraise



www.facebook.com/animalhealthtrust



www.twitter.com/ahtofficial

Dyson's decades of dedicated equine research

Dr Sue Dyson, world-renowned expert in equine orthopaedics, is one of only three scientists who will be inducted into the Equine Research Hall of Fame, at the University of Kentucky this October. As Head of Department in our Equine Clinic, her service and contribution to equine research has been recognised and rewarded by her peers, colleagues and previous inductees, who have nominated her for this accolade.

With a strong background as a rider and a particular interest in lameness and poor performance in sports horses, Sue has an in-depth knowledge and understanding of performance problems in horses of all disciplines. Sue studied veterinary medicine and surgery at the University of Cambridge, before completing post graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania. Returning to the UK, she began working at Animal Health Trust, where she has dedicated almost 35 years to treating hundreds of patients each year, all of which have contributed to her pioneering research.



Sue with her Springer Spaniels, Jeyfus and Ella



"As a lameness clinician, I feel humbled and honoured to have been elected to join an elite band of scientists in the UK Equine Research Hall of Fame. I owe a huge debt of gratitude, not only to the friends and colleagues with whom I've had the privilege to work, but of course also to the horses, which provide endless challenges. I have been constantly inspired to try to improve the welfare of these fantastic athletes," said Sue.

Some of Sue's most ground breaking research includes validating the usefulness and limitations of ultrasonography, scintigraphy and MRI for routine diagnostic use. This data has then been translated into practical benefits for improving the accuracy of diagnosis and treatment for all horses suffering from injury, at the AHT's Equine Clinic and beyond. Sue may see hundreds of horses each year at the Clinic, but her research is available to support and improve the knowledge of all vets, helping more horses than will ever be checked in at the AHT. Sue continues to investigate equine health and welfare, with current projects focusing on the recognition of pain in horses, the influence of tack and a rider on lameness and how horses adapt their gait in the face of injury. Next year will be Sue's 35th year at the AHT, but inspired by the resilience of these athletes, she still works tirelessly to improve their care for years to come.

Sue will be presented with a plaque and trophy at the university's induction ceremony in October. For more information on Sue's and the AHT's extensive equine research visit: www.aht.org.uk/horses

Your Legacy is our Future



If you have ever loved an animal you will know how important their health is. Everything the Animal Health Trust does has the health and welfare of companion animals at its heart.

Thanks to previous legacy gifts, the AHT is constantly finding new ways to prevent and reduce the suffering of present and future generations.

With a number of major projects in the planning stage or already underway, including vital research into cancer, lameness and blindness, gifts in Wills are crucial to the AHT's growing programme. So, for the sake of the animals that so enrich our lives, please consider leaving us a gift in your Will.

Over one third of our voluntary income comes from legacies and without it we would simply cease to be effective.



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