

THE MILLSTONE

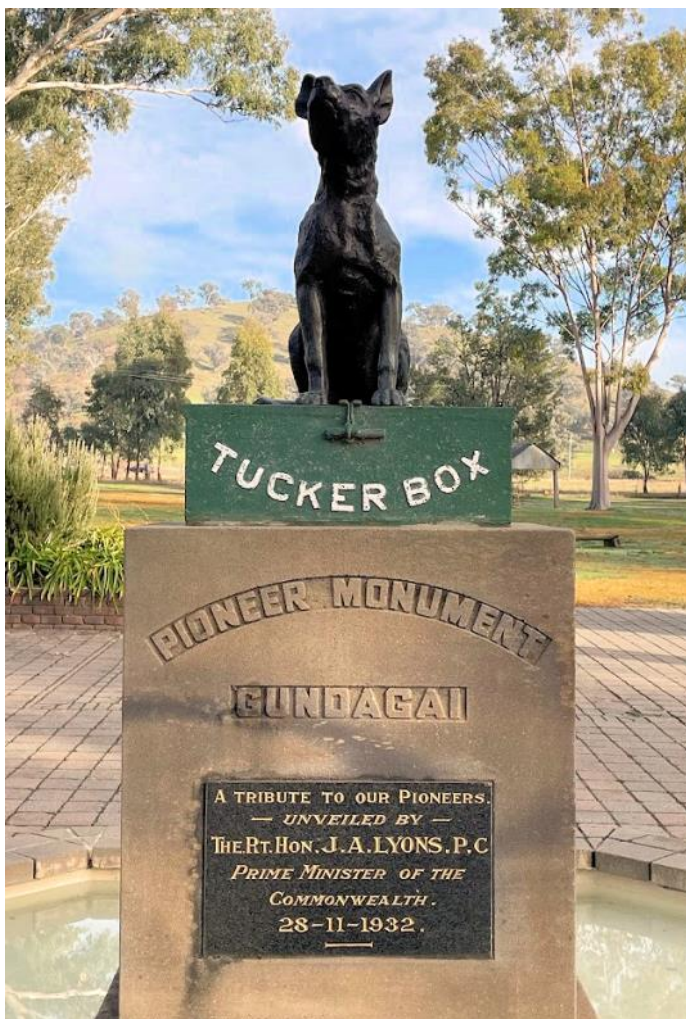
KURRAJONG ~ COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society is dedicated to researching, recording, preserving and promoting the history of the district. Covering the area north and west of the Hawkesbury River – North Richmond, Kurmond, Kurrajong, Berambing, Bilpin, Grose Vale, Grose Wold, Bowen Mountain, Colo, Wilberforce, Ebenezer, Glossodia, Tennyson, Freemans Reach.

The True Story of the “Dog on the Tuckerbox” *report by Pat O’Toole*

Associate Professor Richard White spoke at our May meeting about the “Dog on the Tuckerbox” statue on the Hume Highway at Gundagai.

Gundagai was an important stopping place on the coach



journey from Sydney to Melbourne as well as being a centre for rural life. However the Main South Railway, which arrived in the 1890s, bypassed the town. (It was later on a branch line to Tumut) In early 1900’s a “Back to Gundagai Festival” brought people around but it lapsed. By the 1930’s motor vehicles were travelling the Hume Highway but Gundagai needed to give tourists a reason to stop and spend money.

The well known ballad by Jack Moses, “Five Miles From Gundagai” provided the inspiration for the tourist attraction, “The Dog on the Tuckerbox”. Created by local artist, Frank Rusconi, it was installed at a service centre five miles from Gundagai. The official unveiling in 1932, in conjunction with a revival of “Back to Gundagai” was led by Prime Minister Joe Lyons. A great procession moved from the town to the statue where PM Lyons spoke of the need to be independent.

After 94 years it is still a much visited attraction with travellers stopping to see the statue, take photos and maybe buy a souvenir, proceeds of which continue to support the town, particularly the hospital for which it was created in 1932.

Most tourists see it as a tribute to a faithful dog guarding his master’s box. However the ballad is about a bullocky who has had a very bad time with everything going wrong. The climax can hardly be such a tame event where his dog sat on the tuckerbox. The much more likely event is that the dog shat on (or even in) the tuckerbox. It seems that writers are disinclined to use the crude version, whereas in a spoken presentation the crude version is more likely to be used and is the true story of the dog on the tuckerbox.

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Daily Pictorial
12 Nov 1930

Note the mention of ‘nine miles’ rather than ‘five miles’. It seems the first monument was erected at nine miles but the monument unveiled by the Prime Minister was at five miles. See [Wikipedia](#) for a full discussion.

Happy With Either?

JACK MOSES, “drummer,” raconteur, and widely-known city bushman, was seen in Pitt Street—apparently staring into space.

“I was just watching,” said Jack, “that cattle-dog over there. He might easily have been my fellow, who sat on the tucker-box nine miles from Gundagai.”

To another question, apropos the Gundagai man’s fondness for Bondi Beach, the reply was: “Well, when I’m at Gundagai I want to be at Bondi, and when I’m in the city, and see something that reminds me of the bush—like that cattle-dog—I want to be back at Gundagai! That’s the way it is.”

President's Report

Hello everyone,

The tour of the WB Clarke Geoscience Centre at Londonderry was on Monday 9th March and was very interesting. Apart from the vast arrays of racking holding the hundreds of thousands of core samples, they also have a very extensive display of NSW minerals. See pics below. There was also a very impressive UV camera that could detect the mineral content of a core sample simply by scanning it.

The March GM was a daytime event held in Kurrajong CWA hall. Our speaker was Richard White from the RAHS. His topic was 'The Dog on the Tuckerbox'. See report on page 1.

In May our General Meeting is at the Kurrajong Radio Museum, on Monday 25th May at 19:00. Our guest speaker will be Mal Bobrige, speaking on his life in the navy and RFS. He has served as a submariner, Navy Police and as an RFS Group captain, among other roles. Hope to see you there.

Our plans for the Upper Hunter Tour have run into some snags, not the least of which is that Morpeth Museum is closed for renovations until July. We have decided to postpone until August.

The Mid Winter Lunch, is on Monday 27th July, speaker will be Ron Ray from the National Maritime Museum speaking on 'Bass and Flinders'. It will be held at our favourite Bowling Club and we have a very tempting menu courtesy of Sarah. See page 8.

This year marks the centenary of the Pansy line opening. We are planning a special 'Virtual Line Tour' on Sunday November 8th.

We have picked the date for our Christmas Party. Saturday 5th December at 17:00 (5pm). Mark it down!

Our advertiser, Schembrae's Restaurant, is closed until further notice. We thank them for their support.

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Pat O'Toole inspecting one of the displays, which shows all the minerals in a mobile phone. In the background you can see core samples out for inspection and the display cases on the left. Right: Storage racking Photos DG

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If errors are found feedback is welcome.

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THE NESS FAMILY Part 2 *as told to John Williams by Ron Ness*

Ron Ness

Ron was the youngest of the Ness siblings. Born in 1942 he attended Kurrajong North Primary School, for a while. Ron was a good reader but couldn't spell to save his own life. He said that the teacher used to cane him after every Spelling Test for getting so many words wrong. Ron didn't finish his primary school years there. His mother sent him to Kurrajong School, sick of the constant caning of her son.

There was an incident at the school quite a few years before Ron attended to do with his older siblings. One day Mr. Simpson was belting into Ron's older brother Kelly with a cane, giving him an absolute thrashing. Ron and Kelly's older sister Thelma, got out of her seat, grabbed the cane out of Mr. Simpson's hand, broke it into several pieces and then proceeded to take Kelly home. I haven't got any detail as to what happened after that, but I do know Thelma and Kelly returned to school within a few days.

When Ron was a child, he loved nothing more than attending fetes held next to where the present Powell Park is at Kurrajong Heights. Ron said the locals always seemed to be holding events there. This was also where the Kurrajong Heights Cricket Team had their oval. The area of land I am talking about stretches from Powel Park to Bells Line of Road and up to the old Scott's Nursery boundary. The locals would pitch large tents just inside the fence line next to the road.

When Ron went to High School, he worked most weekends at Frank Davis's farm located down Hermitage Road. Ron would spray the fruit trees, rotary hoe and pick citrus. Ron was great mates with Frank's son Jim-

my. Ron enjoyed his High School days at Richmond but the moment he was old enough to leave at 15 years of age, he did so.



Ron, back row, 3rd from left, in 1957

Another fond memory of Ron's when he was growing up was when old Pop Heisey would load up his ute with locals on a Saturday night and they'd all head off to the Kurrajong Picture Theatre for a night out. Pop Heisey lived on the opposite side of the road to Ron's family, about 100 metres up Bells Line of Road.

When Jimmy Davis took over from his dad on the farm Ron and Jimmy still saw quite a lot of each other. They had a common interest. A love of tractors, bulldozers and earth moving. When Jimmy Davis went into earth moving Ron would quite often go out on jobs with him.

After leaving High School Ron gained an apprenticeship as a cabinet maker. However, this was right out at Coonabarabran. His brother-in-law was working for the

Continued page 4



More WB Clarke photos. Mineral displays and our enthusiastic guide, Paul. Photos DG

Continued from page 3

same company there. Ron's accommodation was a lean-to building with a tin roof. However, when it was raining Ron had to put a canvas over him and the bed to stop the water dripping on him throughout the night. Ron remembers it as being freezing cold and very harsh living conditions. After completing 2 years of his apprenticeship Ron decided to come back to Kurrajong and look for work.

He ended up getting a job with Bill McNamara, building the new Worker's Club at Lithgow. When that job was finished, he again looked for work in the local area.

Ron teamed up with Dennis {Stem} Lord. This would prove to be a lifetime friendship. Stem had a small bulldozer and Ron had a truck, but no licence to drive it. They logged timber around Kurrajong Heights and Bilpin. They did this for around two years.

One night Ron went to Allambie Guest House for a party. Apparently, several young ladies had come up from the city for a stay at the guest house. Mrs Goreham, the proprietor, thought it would be a good idea to invite some local young men to meet the city girls. A couple of weeks after the party this led to Ron and Val Saunders getting together for a double date with Bruce Lord and his girlfriend.

Ron married Val Saunders on the 3rd July 1965. They built a home at Pecks Road, Kurrajong Heights.



At the time Ron had bought his first bulldozer and was working in the bush for Buckett Brothers and Ness Mill out at Colo. He was hauling logs out of the gullies and building ramps for the logs to be loaded.

Around that time, it was a particularly wet year. Too wet to be hauling much timber out of the bush. So, before they had even lived in their new house Ron found he had to look for work out of the district. Ron and Val decided to move to Lake Cargelligo which is around midway between Forbes and Parkes but about 190 kilometres further west.

At Lake Cargelligo Ron was contracted to push up trees into piles, ready to be burned on a 1,000-acre block of



land. Workers had previously been employed to chain down the trees and mallee using giant anchor chains between two bulldozers. Once Ron gathered the piles together, they were burned and then the owner had some good agricultural land to use.

Ron also put in dams for the owners but out there they weren't called dams, they were called tanks. It was completely flat land and Ron had to dig down until he found good soil that would hold water. Ron would then put in good fill and build it up to the top again. The tanks were square on top and shaped like an upside-down pyramid.

Lake Cargelligo was a very harsh environment. Ron remembers one hot spell of 4 days of temperatures around 115 degrees Fahrenheit (45°C). Stephen Buckett, the son of Jack Buckett, also worked with Ron. Ron and Val's youngest child Jodie was born at Lake Cargelligo.

One day in a nearby area called Mount Hope, Ron went into a small pub to have a beer. He was quite taken-back when he realised the pub had a sloping floor that sloped towards the bar. Anyone that was slightly inebriated found it very hard to leave the bar because of the angle of the floor. Purposely done or just coincidence? We might never know.

After a few years at Lake Cargelligo Ron, Val and their 2 children moved back to Kurrajong Heights and finally got to live in the new house they'd had built. I [John Williams] had just had a new house built in Peck's Road at the end of 1970, so the Ness Family and I were neighbours, some 100 metres apart.

Ron decided to start up a new, small sawmill at Putty. Now you can see how the Ness family and the Buckett family were continually intertwined as his partner in this venture was another son of Jack Buckett's, called Terry.

Their new mill focussed on logging and milling smaller trees. Ones that were too small to be an economic proposition for Buckett Brothers and Ness Mill at Kurrajong Heights, but still trees with enough timber in them to be milled at Putty for commercial success. Ron and

Continued from previous page

Terry finished up their business together after a couple of years. Ron had a young family, and he used to stay out at Putty during the week and then come home for weekends. Doing this took too much time away from enjoying his young family so Ron decided to give it away.



Ron did some fencing work for a while. Then he and Dave Bennett bought a coal run. They contracted to Austin and Butta, who owned several coal mines in the Lithgow District. They both had large trucks, and they carted coal from Lithgow to Riverstone Meats Works. When the meat works closed they did some carting around Lithgow. Then they gained a contract to supply North Shore Hospital with coal. Only trouble was they had to deliver after midnight. The chute at the hospital was built in the horse and wagon days and it was only very small. Therefore, delivering the coal was a very slow process and their large trucks would have most of the road blocked. Hence the midnight deliveries.

Austin and Butta ended up closing the coal mines due to industrial action. Hege's Transport took over any work that Austin and Butta were doing other than the coal. However, Hege's would only pay around half of what the original owner used to pay Ron for hauling goods, so he gave away the job as he would've been working for very little return.

Later in life Ron found himself back at Buckett Brothers and Ness Mill. He worked their part time until just before it closed in 1988.

From that time until retirement Ron worked for Dennis and Bruce Lord from Bilpin. They had an excavation business. One of Ron's main jobs was digging holes in the ground to take concrete water tanks. Ron was back again to the work he loved, driving excavators.

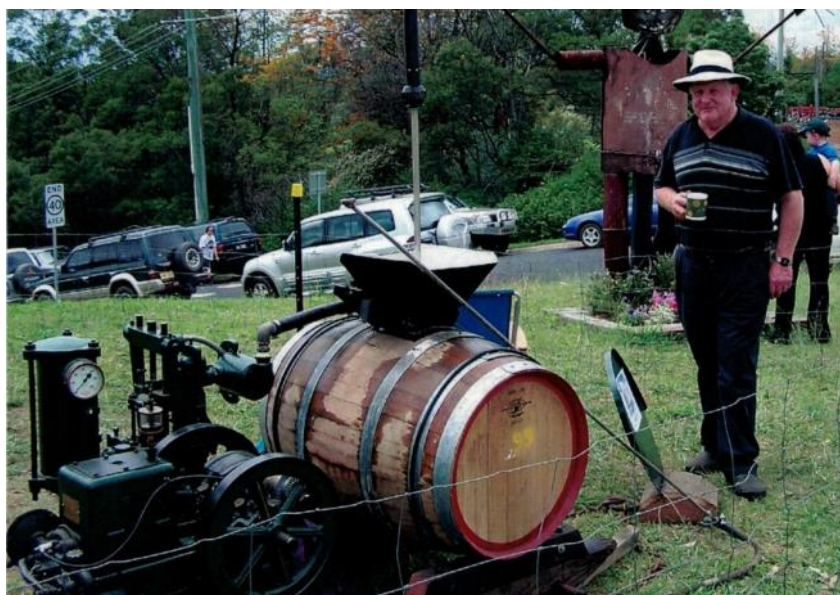
Ron and Val are now enjoying retirement. They have moved from their home at Kurrajong Heights back to the original Ness Family property at Kurrajong Hills.



Above: Ron's BP truck, Ron's coal truck

Ron next secured the BP agency for the area. Ron and Val worked very hard delivering heating oil to homes from North Richmond to Mt Wilson. They also supplied diesel and petrol to farms and truck drivers. Back in those days many farms had a large tank on them to take the deliveries. This proved to be a successful business for the Ness family.

After a few years of running the BP agency Ron and Val received a shock. Out of the blue BP decided to change their set up and Ron received the news that BP were discontinuing all agencies, like the one Ron and Val had. Ron had to look for other work.



Ron pictured with an antique spray cart he restored. The cart is on slides and was pulled along by a horse. Two men operated it with a spray hose each either side of the cart.

Our member John Williams is writing a book on Kurrajong Heights. This is an extract of his chapter on the Ness family which he has kindly submitted to the Millstone.

PLYNLIMMON Part 2, After Alfred Jones *by Deborah Hallam*

In 1873 Alfred Jones conveyed the remainder of the land at *Plynlimmon* to the Bishop of Sydney to be used for a Minister's dwelling and Glebe.

This sale provided for a "competency" described in Sarah's obituary, 1910, allowing them to purchase a house in Forbes Street, Windsor. A Government Gazette records Alf as farming, presumably on the *Plynlimmon* land.

In November 1884 the Bishop of Sydney conveyed 45 acres to Arthur Charles Macquarie Bowman and T.H.F Griffin, the manager of the Commercial Bank Richmond for £1500. Griffin transferred his share to Bowman as a mortgage. In August of that year Bowen had announced in the Maitland Mercury that he was relocating with his family to *Plynlimmon, Wheeny Creek via Richmond*.

Arthur Bowman had been born in Windsor in 1844 and married a local girl, Clarissa Tuckerman in 1868. They had moved to a West Maitland property in around 1875 after the birth of a number of children. Clarissa died in 1880 probably due to the birth of a daughter, May Isobel. Bowman married Anne Henrietta Boydell in 1882 and their only child, Emily May was born the following year. Bowman was widowed again when Anne died in 1890 leaving him to marry 21-year-old Emily Murdoch in 1894.

Bowmen purchased a substantial amount of adjoining land to a total of 105 acres of which 60 was devoted to orange orchards and the remainder to cattle grazing having won many awards for his cattle breeds in Maitland. The property also became a centre for the small group of South Kurrajong residents who were among those campaigning for the new railway as evidenced by the names of those who attended a railway meeting on the site in 1891.

Over the next few years Bowman reduced the size of the property with just over 53 acres remaining. By June 1908 the property had become too much for Arthur Bowman. He conveyed the previously mortgaged property to Roland Hill Ducker retaining a lifelong

interest for himself and for Emily after his death. No sooner had this been certified than he assigned his interest and all finances to Emily.

This document, (Land Titles Book-Number, 866-893) is interesting for its listing of 40 acres 3 rods of Wooleys grant, 13 acres 17 perches of adjacent land, all household furniture, goods and chattels in and around the houses, messuage and the orchard. This is the first reference to more than one house on the property.

Emily took charge and in November, 1908 Mrs A. C. M. Bowman, Grose Vale advertised :

KURRAJONG – Furnished, Plynlimmon, cool House, 1000ft, 10 rooms, 7 bedrooms (3 double), bathroom with shower, good water supply, tennis court, wide verandahs, healthy climate, superb views. £3 3s.

It seems the house was let for about 3 years with Emily and Arthur moving into a smaller house nearby. The next advertisement appeared in 1911:.

To Let – A commodious residence of 10 rooms, with valuable orchard, situated at Grose Vale and known as "Plynlimmon". The property consists of 40 acres orchard, planted with orange, pear, apricot and other choice fruit trees in full bearing. Also 15-acre grass paddock. Tenders for a lease of five or ten years.

This lease may not have been taken up, as in 1912 Emily was advertising tenders for the fruit crops from the orchard, and also for the rent of furnished bedrooms and the use of kitchen and dining room.

Arthur Charles Macquarie Bowman died in Richmond Hospital, West Market St, in 1913, aged 68. He is buried at St. Peters Anglican church, Richmond.

Arthur Henry Tate had been appointed rector of St Stephens, Kurrajong on 1903. In 1914 he announced his decision to retire and "go on the land". To this purpose he had purchased land adjoining the church and intended to build his home *Arthona*. During the construction of the house, he and his family moved to

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The western side of "Plynlimmon" showing its neglected state in 1988.
Image 190303

Plynlimmon prompting Emily Bowman to sell her household furniture. Emily moved to a small two roomed cottage she owned outright near the main house.

Emily Bowman died in Enmore in 1922 and full ownership of *Plynlimmon* passed to Annie Lindsay Ducker, daughter of Roland. Annie leased the property

to different individuals until Leslie and Minnie Louise (Lewis) Dunston took up occupation in 1926. Annie Ducker died in 1936 bequeathing *Plynlimmon* to Leslie and Minnie in her will. The transfer was registered in 1942.

Leslie sold the property to Leofric (Joe) and Kath Dunston in 1950. Kath recalled severe westerly winds could cause "poor old *Plynlimmon*" to sway like a ship out at sea. The house was referred to as Number Two house as the family was already in residence at *Westbury* close by.

The property remained in Dunston hands until the 1980s when it was sold and renamed *The Old Anvil* from where a cottage style blacksmiths operated.

Since, it has been sold and renamed several times, and renovated as a B-and-B. Although there have been additions to the ground extending the accommodation, the old cottage remains virtually intact.

Thank you to Cathy McHardy for her assistance with the early land titles.

BROADBENT'S MOTOR GUIDE 1927

Submitted by Bryan Wyborn

GEO. R. BROADBENT'S
STANDARD AND OFFICIAL MOTOR GUIDE:
SYDNEY to MELBOURNE
(AND BACK)
THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY
NEW AND REVISED EDITION 1927

With Sectional MAPS OF ROUTE and Detailed Description of Road; also Intermediate and Aggregate Mileage; Hotels, Garages, &c.

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Royal Automobile Club of Victoria
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AUTHOR AND PUBLISHER ALSO OF—
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THE HOLIDAY MAP—"Fifty Miles Round Melbourne," 1/6
Special Motor Guide to Melbourne via Sth. Coast and Gippsland (Vic.), 2/6
Special Motor Guide—Melbourne to Adelaide via the Coorong, 2/6
Special Motor Guide—"Across the Alps" (Vic.) 2/6
Routes to Canberra, 1/6
Guide to Cowes, Phillip Island and San Remo, 1/-

This guide gave a blow by blow description of the highway from Sydney to Melbourne in 1927, including some useful info such as that shown to the right.

Calling it the "Federal Highway" is peculiar because the Federal Highway is now the road from the Hume Highway to Canberra and it wasn't named until 1931. The Hume Highway was named in 1930 and there doesn't seem to be any record of it ever being called the Federal Highway ?? Prior to 1928 in NSW it was called "The Great Southern Road".

VISITING MOTORISTS AND NUMBER PLATES.

In conformity with existing regulations, visiting motorists entering New South Wales from Victoria (or other contiguous State), must report at the first Police Station and obtain a visitor's number plate, which must be secured in position so as to cover his own number at the rear of the car. For a motor-cycle a two-faced plate (folder) is supplied, which is placed over the number plate on the front mudguard. A deposit of twenty shillings is required for each plate, which sum is refunded when the motorist returns the plate at the Police Station in the last town to be passed through on leaving New South Wales, by whatever route adopted. The visiting motorist is also required to state the probable length of his stay in New South Wales, and also at what point he will quit that State.

Dates for Your DIARY

May General Meeting

Kurrajong Radio Museum Mon 25th May 19:00

Speaker: Mal Bobrige on his life in the Navy and RFS, including as a submariner, Navy Police and RFS Group Captain.

Mid Winter Lunch Monday 27th July, noon

Kurrajong Heights Bowling Club. Catering by Sarah.
Ron Ray from Australian Maritime Museum speaking on 'Bass & Flinders'.

Menu choices:

Entrée:

A Prawn Cocktail Salad

B Soup of the day with Focaccia Bread

Main:

C Crumbed Veal Parmigiana

D Beef & Guinness Stew with Creamy Mash

Dessert:

E Deep Fried Bananas with Butterscotch Sauce

F Individual Pavlova with Marinated Strawberries & Passion-fruit and fresh cream

Please specify your choices in the Notes when booking, using the letters shown. eg 2xA, C & D, 2xF

Members \$42 Guests \$45 GF available on request

Booking essential.

From THE ARCHIVES



Horace (Jack) Hurst who set up a Barbers Shop in Kurrajong and later a General Store, with his dog in 1928. *Image 067577*

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