

BENCHPRESS

It has been a whole year since I last wrote to you all through Benchpress and, for those of you who have missed our quarterly newsletter I confirm that we intend to revert to the previous three monthly editions going forward. For those of you who do not enjoy it; I expect that I am already in your recycling bin.

Many of our customers have decided that a safety briefing, delivered at the work face, prior to starting is key to reducing accidents and incidents at work. In support of this initiative and with significant input from Mark Byrne, London Operations Director, and Peter Booth, our Company Safety Manager, we have developed our own safe start sheet, reproduced on this page. This system is already in place in the London Region and will be rolled out in the North so that every gang will have to stop and take stock, prompted by this document, to ask themselves; have I considered all the risks, and do I have all the correct equipment, to execute the next task safely? I fully support this initiative and thank Mark and Peter for their work in introducing this procedure.

BENCHMARK SCAFFOLDING
Setting the Standards

Team Briefing Form: Safe Start with

Date:

Contractor:		Site:		Supervisor:									
Before Team Briefing ask yourself do I need: 	Supervision	Training	RAMS	Crane / HIAB / lifting plan	Confined space / Lift / riser permit	Plant / Equipment	Exclusion zones	Signage					
	TICK	TICK	TICK	TICK	TICK	TICK	TICK	TICK					
During briefing ask everyone do we...? 	Do you have the right skills for the job?	TICK	Do you have the correct PPE for the job?	TICK	Are you clear on where you must attach your lanyard and when?	TICK	What type of Advanced Guardrail do you need?	TICK	Are you segregated from other trades?	TICK	Do you feel good and fit for work?	TICK	
	Ask - Which keys do we need to do this job safely? 												
 Fixed Single Double Twin Exclusion zone		 Strops in date Trained Exclusion zone		 Secure anchor Point Good working order		 Fit for Purpose		 Resin Anchors		 Dust Mask Impact Goggles		 Check the site weather board Is it icy Is it windy	
 Storage area Exclusion zone		 Are there Cranes Forklifts or Hoists available Good ground conditions		 Strops in date Trained Good working order		 Plan 1 Plan 2 Plan 3 Not required		 Pat tested 3 months Good working order		 Hot Works Confined Space		 Have you received a Company weather Text message	

During one of my monthly visits to our Northern region office I recklessly used the saying “if we win that job I will eat my hat” the project to which I referred was the new Forth Bridge crossing project in Scotland. Further on, within this edition of Benchpress, you will see an article on the said project; yes we did win it and on the following visit I was presented with a Benchmark hard hat to eat. Fortunately they had gone easy on me and the hat that I had to eat was specially made for the event out of sponge cake and cream filing covered by white icing. It was in fact delicious and was preferable to the traditional hardened plastic. I will, needless to say, choose my throw away remarks more carefully in future.

On the trading front we continue to secure plenty of quality work on prestigious projects with some of the leading contractors. It is commonly believed that the economy in general, and particularly the Construction Industry, is picking up well over the last six month or so and one of our challenges is selecting the right jobs with the right customers. The key word here is selecting; we are lucky enough to have an element of choice in which jobs we go for and which we decline. We are careful not to become complacent about keeping the order book ticking over but the fact is we cannot develop meaningful working relationships with every potential customer. We are focusing on the contractors who have stuck with us over many years and through thick and thin.

You will, no doubt, be aware that we have made significant investment in new materials during the last year. This spending reflects the confidence that our owners and investors have in our progress. We are significantly ahead of budget on turnover and on profit margin and consequently we are achieving this growth without the need for an overdraft. I thank you again for your hard work; we have much to be positive about so let’s push on.

Palace of Westminster

Cast Iron tile Removal for Shepley Engineers Ltd

Benchmark Scaffolding & Hoists have just completed the first section of this project in Black Rod's gardens which amounts to about one third of the job.

The scaffold roof enclosures provide full weather protection and incorporates niko lifting rails fixed to the underside of the roofs to allow the removal of the cast iron gutters and roof tiles. The gutter sections weighing



up to 500kg and roof tiles at up to 150kg all have to be removed, transported to Shepley's Works in Cumbria where they are restored to their original condition (in some cases exact copies made), before being returned and replaced on the roof. Each gutter and tile has to be tagged so they can be replaced in their exact same location.

The scaffold which was one of the most complex we have ever undertaken is a credit to Danny McCarthy and all our operatives who have worked on this project.

**Bob Young—Technical Director
London Region**



Woolwich Barracks - Royal Artillery

The scaffolding and temporary roof structure that has encapsulated these famous barracks for the last year will be progressively removed throughout July and August. This £900k scaffolding project has provided weather protection to enable the replacement of the main roof trusses and slate roof covering on this historic grade II listed building. Within the barracks we have also provided birdcage access using aluminium tube to minimise the loading onto the timber floors.



Bob Young, our Technical Director, has provided the design input for this job and Des McVeigh and his team (OJay Roynon, Micky Harrington, Stuart Didd, Jamie Brooks and Charlie Walker) have been present throughout; picking up numerous safety awards and a glowing audit report following a two day independent inspection. Des even starred in a Lend Lease in-house safety related promotional video whilst on site, the link for the video is:

<http://youtu.be/SvWpgTd401k>

Rob West, Managing Director

Project SLAM at Allenby Barracks, Bovington

in Dorset, consisted of two new accommodation blocks for the Royal Tank Regiment of the British Army. It took approximately four weeks for each scaffold to be erected around each block and the work was carried out by Paul Rittenberg, George Rittenberg, Alan Colyer, Dave Roberts and Steve Manby.



The scaffold at the **Cavalry Barracks in Hounslow** which covers the grade 2 listed building is 125m long by 16.5m high with spans up to 30.0m. The roof was designed using 750 haki alloy beams with additional supporting spine beams to reduce the spans at duo pitch locations.

The supporting scaffold was made using traditional fully braced 5 board wide scaffold to allow for all necessary work to the external elevations to be carried out, internally we have provided various types of access platforms with many being bridged between the walls to keep loads off the fragile floors.

We have also been involved in designing & building vertical support scaffolds to the floors & roof trusses to allow replacement or strengthening works to be carried out.



Bob Young—Technical Director
London Region

Congratulations



Benchmark Scaffolding have been awarded the September Debut Services Ltd safety award for the month.

We have especially picked one of your Scaffolders to receive this award, Mr Stewart Didd, for his due diligence when he discovered a fire in the Barracks close to the site perimeter fence early one morning and put it out. He was awarded a M&S token for £25 and a certificate.



We are aware that there have been a handful of issues over the past few months but these have all been resolved efficiently by Des McVeigh, Site Manager, and OJ, Site Supervisor.

I personally congratulated all your men for their support and took a group photograph of your team.

Keep Safe, and keep up the good work.

Regards

Ray Carter -Senior Construction Manager
Project Slam

Paul Smith won the February 2014 monthly individual site safety award on Greenwich Square, Mace Project. Award given by Davin Betts

Steve Savile won the September 2013 monthly individual site safety award on Belgrave Square Lend Lease Project. Award given by Paul Martyn. Each receiving £50 Marks and Spencer vouchers, matching the amount they won from site.

As from July 2014 the company safety bonus scheme will be re-introduced, the award will be £100 worth of Marks & Spencer vouchers, and one award per month throughout the company.





Lee and Anthony Parchment won the monthly safety award from Simon Coombe of John Sisk at the Victoria Street project. They received £25 of Argos vouchers and Benchmark will match them with £25 of Marks & Spencer vouchers. Antony had been working on the night shift constructing the gantry scaffold, he worked closely with the public in a controlled and polite way, and Lee received the award for wearing the correct PPE whilst on site at all times.



John Beaney won the March individual site safety award on the Mace Project, 5 Broadgate, for consistently working at height in a safe manner and carrying out safety work and safety improvements. He received a £50 voucher from Mace which we will match in accordance with our Company policy, so £100 in total to John.

Well done!

Alan Colyer, Paul and George Rittenberg won the monthly safety award for March on one of our Debut SLAM projects at Bovington.



London Region Gloves



Following feedback from site we have decided to stock various different types of gloves; Warrior, Click 2000 and Reflex. Sizes medium to extra large will be available.

Last year, in the London branch alone, we purchased 6,320 gloves, that's nearly 18 pairs of gloves a day. Each pair costs £0.90 so that's a total value of £5,688 a year!

Please do not throw your gloves away before they are worn out, we must always try and make savings where we can.

Vicky Hunt-Poore
PA to Rob West and Buyer



A First on the Forth

Last month we started work for Forth Crossing Bridge Constructors (FCBC), on the new Forth Road Bridge - which will be known as the Queensferry Crossing. It has been described as the biggest construction project in Scotland in a generation. On completion, it will connect Lothian (at South Queensferry) with Fife at (North Queensferry).

We had been in consultation with the main contractor for over a year with numerous design and construction proposals with Bob Young using all his experience and expertise to find a solution.

The difficulty was how to reach the foundation following a pour in order to use vibrating pokers to compact the concrete; the solution was to have a steel frame in the centre which would remain inside and act as reinforcing in the piers once completed. The scaffold had to be installed so it could be removed from bottom up following each pour. It was decided that we would have to make a centre frame to work from to fix the reinforcing bars and then have additional walkways to be lifted up each time by crane, then dismantle the scaffold below.

The team of 6 scaffolders lead by Matt Wilkinson built the scaffold bridges on land then they were transported to the cofferdams by barge, and then lifted into place which meant they had a boat trip to and from work every day. As you can see from the photographs the scaffold is now in place and the construction of the piers is well under way.

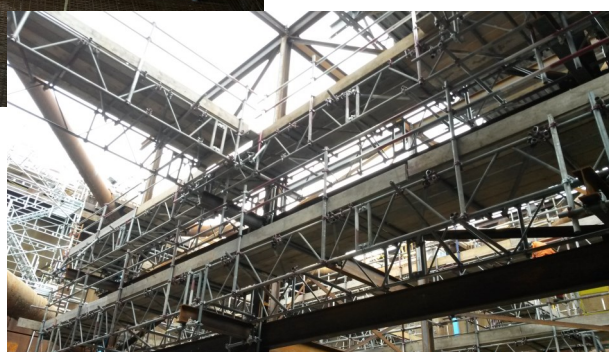
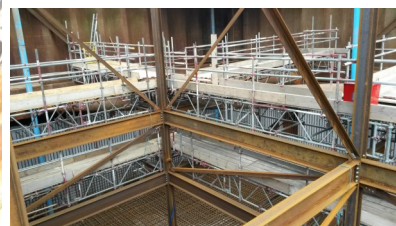
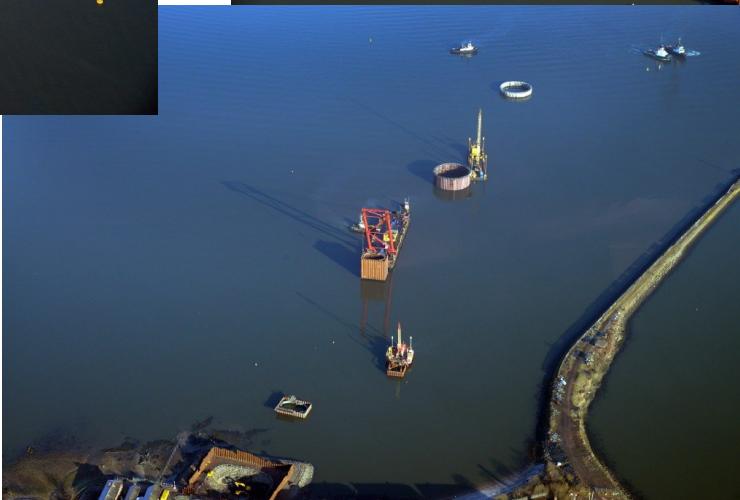
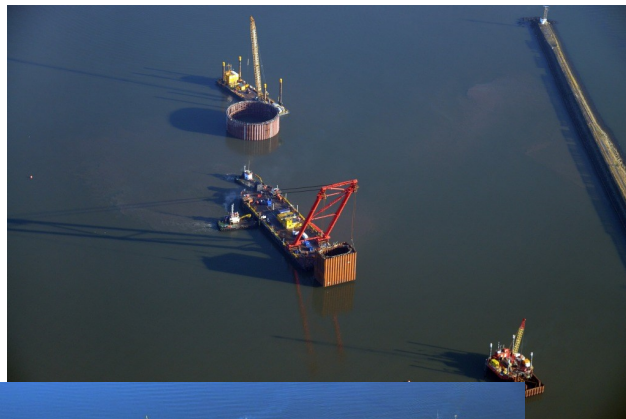
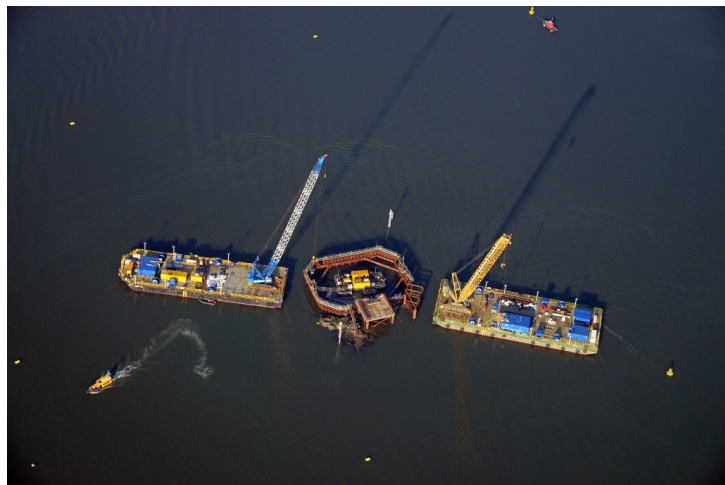
The new bridge will be a cable-stayed structure, with three towers each 207 metres (679 ft) high. Including approaches, the overall length of the bridge will be 2.7 kilometres (1.7 miles). The bridge will carry two lanes of traffic in each direction, plus hard shoulders, with the road designed to motorway standard. The new bridge will carry motor-cycles, cars and heavy goods vehicles, while public transport, cyclists and pedestrians will use the existing bridge. Wind shielding will be built into the design, to enable use of the bridge in high winds, which regularly lead to restrictions on the existing bridge.

The bridge will be the third crossing of the Forth at Queensferry, alongside the Forth Road Bridge, completed in 1964, and the Forth Bridge, a railway bridge completed in 1890.

**Billy Wood—SHE Advisor/Contracts Manager
Northern Region**

Our vision is to be the scaffolding contractor of choice to our customers and employer of choice to our people.





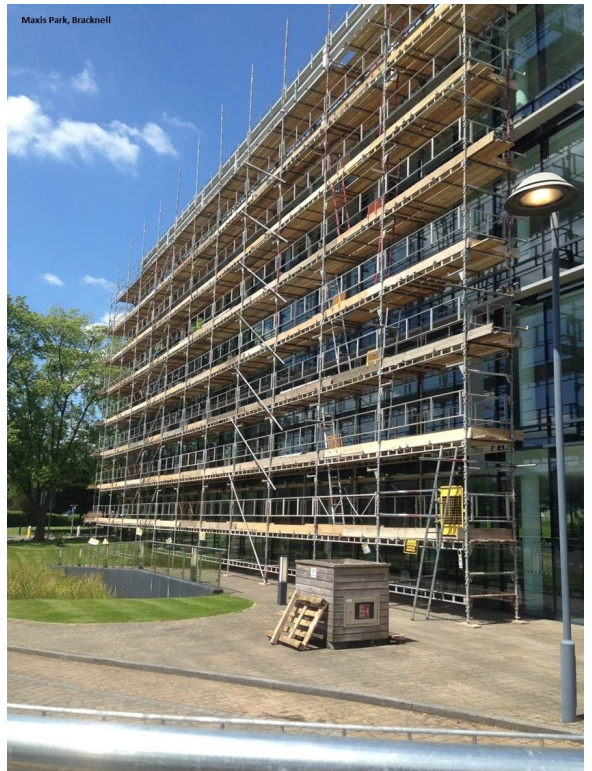
Our *mission* is to not only "Set the Standards" but to progressively and continuously raise them across all aspects of our business.



Benchmark on Broadway

Also continuing with our recent success we are proud to announce that we have been awarded the scaffold package on the Westfields Bradford Broadway shopping complex. The £275m development will, on completion, total 570,000 sq ft of retail and leisure space, with 1,300 new car parking spaces. We believe that the decision to award the scaffold to Benchmark is through our commitment to provide a first class service at a competitive price with an excellent safety performance and safety culture. It is a testimony to all our employees that we can continue to work with Westfields on one of the most prestigious developments in the North of England.

Billy Wood—SHE Advisor/Contracts Manager
Northern Region



In the London region, throughout April and May, we erected a haki scaffold, for window replacement, at Maxis Park, Bracknell for JPW Osprey. It was built by Paul Rittenberg, George Rittenberg, Alan Colyer, Dave Roberts and Steve Manby, and was managed by Tony Kerrigan.

Happy 40th Birthday

This year one of the most important Acts of parliament to protect people in the workplace will be 40 years old. The Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 will be the big four oh. Its purpose was to implement the

recommendations of the Robens Committee, which reported in 1972 and concluded that the existing workplace safety legislation was over-elaborate and confusing, with about 30 Acts and 500 sets of regulations.

Robens recommended a new structure underpinned by an enabling Act setting out the basic principles of safety responsibility, thereby providing a statutory base on which all future regulations could be founded.

Before the Act, an average of 700 employees were dying at work every year and hundreds of thousands were being injured. Last year, the number of fatalities at work was down to 148 and non-fatal injuries have dropped by more than 75 per cent. Even for those who complain at excessive regulation that is a considerable achievement and, although the statistics are still too high and more needs to be done, it has served its purpose well.

Billy Wood—SHE Advisor/Contracts Manager
Northern Region

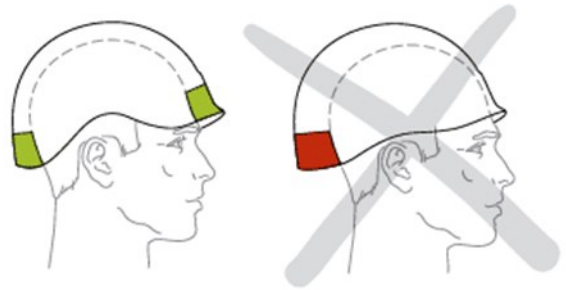
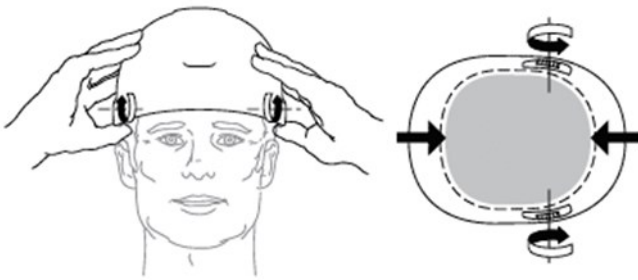
Your new helmet...

PETZL VERTEX VENT

In response to the ever increasing safety conscious site requirements we will now be issuing all of our site operatives, who work at height, with the **Petzl VERTEX VENT Helmet**. These will be distributed in the near future, at which stage all operatives will need to sign to confirm receipt of their helmet which will be labelled with their full name, or nickname of choice. Operatives will receive white helmets and managers will receive black helmets.

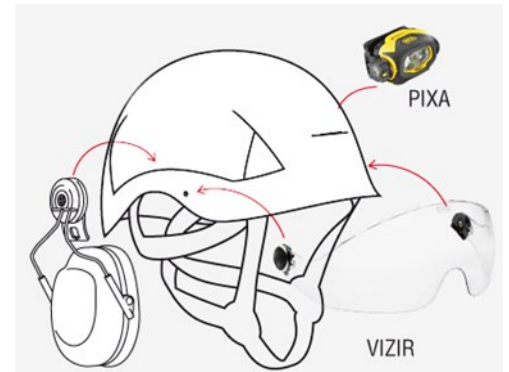
With its strong chin strap, the VERTEX VENT helmet sets the standard in head protection for workers at height. Ventilation holes with adjustable sliding shutters allow air to circulate in the helmet when needed. Its sixpoint mesh headband ensures comfort, and its CenterFit adjustment system adjusts the headband and keeps it centred on the head. The VERTEX VENT is designed to optimally accept hearing protection, the specific VIZIR visor, or a PIXA headlamp.

The CenterFit system allows the helmet to be perfectly centred on the head



Simultaneous operation of the two CenterFit adjustment wheels adjusts the headband.

Your helmet adapts to your lighting needs and additional protection requirements in a few seconds.



These helmets have a retail value of £65 each, which in comparison to our previous type of hat which cost £5.75 each, is extremely expensive. Please ensure you look after your hat and if you decide to leave Benchmark's employment please ensure it is returned to your line manager or else the relevant costs may be deducted from your wages.

Vicky Hunt-Poore
PA to Rob West and Buyer.

Goodbye Farhan and Good Luck



Farhan's departure makes front page headlines.

On 10th June Farhan left Benchmark to take up the position of Finance Director with Rcapital, our previous owners. We could not complain about him 'walking out on us' as we all recognise what a great career move this could be for him. We wish him every success in the future and appreciate all he has done for us during the last three years.



Arif and Karolina say goodbye to Farhan



Farhan is presented with his leaving card



Karolina prepared a special leaving card to ensure Farhan could not forget us.

Our new Financial Controller, Hitesh Patel, has joined us, and after a few weeks handover with Farhan, has already taken the reins to ensure that our success story continues from a sound financial base.

George's Race for Life

Georgina Bradbury is the Office Manager at our Barnsley office and also the editor of Benchpress. I insisted on the inclusion of this article in the edition, Editor or not she can still be over-ruled.

A year ago George was diagnosed with breast cancer and on the 20th July 2014 she will be participating in the Race of Life to help raise money for Cancer Research UK. She has a JustGiving donation page and her story is below.



Hi everyone and thank you for visiting our JustGiving page.

I was diagnosed with breast cancer in June 2013 and 4 days after my youngest's fifth birthday I went into hospital where I had a lumpectomy to remove the cancer.

Explaining to your children at any age about an illness is hard but trying to explain to a 5 & 7 year old about cancer and effects that could happen is harder. We kept out the nasty bits but told them that mummy had to go into hospital for the day and that afterwards I had to have some nasty medicine that might make me poorly but would eventually make me better.

After 4 months of chemotherapy and 3 weeks of radiotherapy in January this year I finished my treatment and it's now approaching 12 months since I was first diagnosed.

Without the help and support of my loving husband Mark who always tried to make me laugh even when I was down, my children Macie and Kori who's cuddles were most precious at a time when I needed them and the love and support of the rest of my family and friends, the last few months would have been much harder to get through.

At the end of my chemotherapy treatment I was asked by my doctor if I would be willing to join the radiotherapy trials and of course I agreed straight away as I believed this was another way of helping a good and well worthy cause. Cancer Research plays a vital role in the prevention of all cancers and without help from the general public, people like me may not be here today. Everyone thinks that cancer will never touch them, and I hope that it never does, but at some point in your life you will always know someone it has affected.



For over 7 years I have donated every month to Cancer Research and along with one of my nieces, Melissa who is now in Australia, have also done Race for Life to help raise as much money and awareness as we could. This year I have the help of two of my other nieces Eleanor and Harriet who will join me, my daughter Macie and my son Kori around Pontefract Racecourse along with thousands of other ladies to raise as much money as we can for the charity.

It doesn't matter how much you donate, small or large, every penny will go towards further research that will help thousands of people like me.

I would just like to say a big thank you to everyone for taking the time to read our page.

“As my daughter keeps saying to me ‘Cancer we’re coming to get you’ and my reply to her is ‘yes we are’.”

It's not too late to donate if you wish and can do this at <https://www.justgiving.com/georgel>

George has been an inspiration to us all in the way she has accepted, and then dealt with, her situation. Throughout the treatment George has continued to work for us, whether from the office or remotely from home, and has remained positive and cheerful at all times – amazing!

I must mention Graham Pope also at this point as he too has continued to force himself into work whilst having various operations and treatments for kidney cancer. Graham's fight continues and he too has been amazing. Georgina, Graham, my own brother Alan, and many others appear to be able to find some inner strength to deal with their own problems and in turn help their friends and loved ones cope with the situation. I say again ‘they are amazing’.

Good health isn't everything but without it everything counts for nothing.

**Regards
Rob West**



Last year my youngest, Lucy, ran in support of her Uncle Alan

If you've recently had a new addition to your family,
or a birthday coming up
send us a photo to the Barnsley office
and we'll make sure we show them in the next edition
or you could email us

barnsley@benchmarkscaffolding.com



A few photos from Mick Fisher's retirement drinks held at the end March, looks like a fun time was had by all. Mick has worked on many prestigious projects and is finishing his career at the Palace of Westminster.



Mick Fisher



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