

Anthony Gill-Martin

1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census

Marmora, Castle-road, Newport, Isle of Wight, Hampshire, England

Name	Relationship	Status	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
<i>Anthony G. Martin</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>Board Schoolmaster</i>	<i>Bratton Fleming, Devon</i>
Harriet K. Martin	Wife	Married	29		Portsmouth, Hants
Kathleen M. A. G. Martin	Daughter		1		Newport, IOW
Mary Morey	Wife's aunt	Widow	64	Living on own means	Carisbrooke, IOW
Rosabella Leigh	Servant	Single	19	General Servant	Newport, IOW
Annie M. Ash	Servant	Single	16	Nurse Maid	Ventnor, IOW

Isle of Wight County Press 27 March 1909

DEATH OF THE MAYOR OF NEWPORT.

ROYAL GOVERNOR'S SYMPATHY.

Impressive Public Funeral.

Pulpit and Public Tributes.

With profound regret we record the death, which took place early on Sunday morning last, at his residence, Marmora, Castle-road, Newport, of the deservedly popular and universally esteemed Mayor of Newport, Mr. Anthony Gill-Martin, C.C., at the age of 66. The late Mayor had been laid aside for about three weeks with influenza and cold, which aggravated his old bronchial trouble, but nothing serious was apprehended until Friday of last week, when, as announced in our last issue, his illness took an alarming turn, and the administration of oxygen had to be resorted to by his medical attendant, Dr. Coombs, J.P.

The announcement made in our columns last week that the Mayor was in a grave condition caused general consternation among the townspeople and others in the Island, as recent reports had led them to hope that his worship would soon be about amongst them again. As late as last Thursday the Mayor was able to get up, and the Deputy Mayor (Mr. Charles Webb) spent some time with him in discussing arrangements for the discharge of the duties of the Mayoralty.

The Mayor continued in a critical condition throughout Friday night, but on Saturday morning he rallied considerably and was able to read with interest in the *County Press* the record of the local happenings during his continued enforced absence from public duty. He was also able to write a letter to the Rev. Miles Atkinson, enclosing a cheque for the new Wootton Bridge Church fund. But this was the last act of service which he was able to render, for during the afternoon his condition changed for the worse, and the patient was in a dangerous condition of collapse.

His son, Dr. A. A. Martin, of Eastbourne, who had arrived that day, was in close attendance upon his father, and though he rallied again he gradually sank and passed peacefully away in the presence of the Mayoress, Dr. Martin, and other relatives, at 1.30 on Sunday morning. Thus the Mayor literally died in harness, and what more fitting circumstance could have been desired by one whose watchword was

always Duty?

As recently as the 1st instant he ventured out in inclement weather to discharge his official duties in connection with the contested election for borough auditors, and he remained till the close of the count on a cold night and then impartially gave the casting vote rendered necessary by a tie between two of the candidates. It was, we believe, from that day that the cold which laid him low for the last time dated.

It was a matter of keen regret to him that owing to that cold he was unable to attend the funeral of the late Mr. Albert Midlane and show the respect he felt for the veteran children's hymn writer. The late Mayor was also greatly disappointed that he was not well enough to attend the last Town Council meeting and that consequently he had to postpone the luncheon to which, for a second year, he had invited the members of the Corporation and the Borough Magistrates.

The news of the Mayor's decease, which was published in the windows of the head office of the *County Press* early on Sunday morning, cast a gloom over the town and deep and sincere were the expressions of regret heard on every side as the burgesses began to realize the extent of the loss which they had suffered by the death of one of the most worthy Mayors who has ever filled the civic chair of the capital of the Island. Added poignancy to the all-pervading sorrow was imparted by the fact that within living memory the inhabitants had not before been stricken by the death of a Mayor during his term in office.

The borough flag was half-masted over the Guildhall, and the knell of the Parish Church was tolled. The prevailing feeling of sorrow at the heavy loss the town had sustained and of sympathy for the bereaved family found expression throughout the day in the pulpits of churches and chapels, where touching tributes were paid to the late Mayor as a man of high Christian character, noble principle, and broad and generous sympathies, who served his day and generation worthily and well in the responsible and honourable positions which he was called upon to fill in the town of his adoption.

During the week public authorities in Newport and Ryde and other parts of the Island have joined in deploring the loss of one so worthy and popular and in bearing testimony to his work and worth. The Royal Governor of the Island, Princess Henry of Battenberg, who is travelling abroad, has graciously identified herself with the public feeling in regard to the loss of the first citizen of the capital of the Island—who had been prominently associated with public functions honoured by the presence and patronage of Her Royal Highness—by especially commanding the Deputy Governor of the Island (Mr. Thomas B. H. Cochrane, M.V.O.) to represent her at the funeral.

The late Mr. Anthony Gill-Martin was a native of Bratton Fleming, North Devon, and was trained for a scholastic career, in which he spent practically the whole of his life. His devotion to the important work of training the young was most marked and at the close of a long and conspicuously able and successful career he remarked "I should have been sorry to have been anything but a teacher". Over 33 years ago the late Mr. Martin came from Seven-oaks to Newport on appointment by the late School Board as headmaster of the Nodehill Schools, formerly the old British Schools, which had just been taken over by the Board, and which, as the log-book entry of Mr. Frederic Stratton (Clerk of the late Board) records, were opened as Board-schools on Monday January 3, 1876, and placed in charge of Mr. Gill-Martin.

The organisation of practically a new school on the Board system, which at that time was evidently not view with much favour in Newport, was an uphill task, but with splendid educational qualifications, strengthened by exemplary thoroughness in all his work, and unflagging enthusiasm born of his whole-hearted devotion to the cause of educating the rising generation, Mr. Martin tackled that task with the determination and perseverance which crowned his efforts with conspicuous success. Commencing with an attendance of 18 boys, he attracted an ever increasing number of scholars, until before the close of his 30 years' mastership more than 300 boys were in attendance at his school.

Eloquent testimony to the success of his work was borne by the excellent reports invariably received from H.M. Inspectors, and many are the worthy citizens of Newport and far beyond who have cause to gratefully remember the educational training they received under him. Apart from his ability as a teacher, Mr. Martin took a deep personal interest in the welfare of his scholars and this is the secret of the affectionate regard which his “boys”, both young and old, have ever entertained towards him.

During his mastership, he lost by death his first wife, who was for many years the able head teacher of the Nodehill Infants’ school. He continued his scholastic duties at Nodehill for some time after his second marriage. Owing to failing health he finally retired from school life towards the end of 1905, more than two years before he was entitled to his superannuation allowance.

The name of the late Mayor is indissolubly associated with the Nodehill Schools, and it is fitting that there should be a proposal on foot to erect a memorial tablet in the school, which was the scene of the major part of his life’s work. During the past year the boys and teachers of the Mayor’s old school have been looking with pride and affection upon a large and excellent portrait of their late headmaster in his Mayoral robes, with the following inscription underneath:

“A. Gill-Martin, Esq., C.C., T.C., Mayor of Newport 1907-8. Presented by the boys and old boys as a small recognition of his 30 years’ excellent work as headmaster of those schools.”

The presentation of this portrait was made to the late Mayor at his old school, and it was unveiled by the Chairman of the Borough Education Committee (Mr. F. E. Whitcher, T.C.) in the presence of the schoolboys. Mr. J. L. Mitchell, who succeeded Mr. Martin as headmaster, after being an assistant under him some years before, mentioned at the presentation the interesting fact that there was at that school a record of over 2000 boys who had had the advantage of Mr. Martin’s training, and many of whom had gone forth into life owing all they had and were to Mr. Martin.

The Mayor was deeply touched in acknowledging the presentation. He spoke of the satisfactory relations which had existed between him and his boys throughout the 30 years, and concluded: “When I am no longer able to come here this portrait may, perhaps, be a reminder to some in days to come that something has been attempted, something done—if only in a very small way—and it may also be an incentive to others to do better, for we want to leave things better than we found them”.

Little did those present think that the time to which the Mayor then referred was so near at hand, and those closing words, which now have so pathetic an interest, will, we doubt not, prove an inspiration to many a Nodehill School boy in the years to come. Shortly after, the presentation referred to some 80 school teachers who had been associated with the late Mr. Martin during his long and successful scholastic career united in doing honour to him at a largely attended social gathering at the Drill-hall and presented him with an illuminated address, congratulating him upon his Mayoral honours.

On this occasion the late Mayor’s old colleague (Mr. W. K. Ediss) appropriately referred to him as an eminent teacher, who had lighted the lamp of patriotism, liberty, and religion in the lives of many who had grown to be good citizens, not only in the Old Country, but also in those who were setting a good example in distant lands. Mr. J. L. Mitchell also truly said that the Mayor had sown amongst them the seeds of kindness, love, generosity, and goodwill, both in and out of school and he was loved and respected by all.

It afforded eloquent testimony to the regard which the late Mr. Martin felt for his adopted town, and a striking proof of his devotion to public interests, that after he had completed what he might rightly have considered his life-work, he should have been willing to place his services at the disposal of the burgesses and become not only a member of the Town Council, but also a member of the County Council. To both of these authorities he was chosen by the electors over two years ago at the “first time of asking”.

On both the Corporation and the County Council Mr. Martin rendered the public conspicuously good service, and he remained a conscientious worker on those authorities till the end. One year's work on the Corporation sufficed to impress his colleagues with his marked aptitude for public service, and in November, 1907, he was deservedly honoured by election to the Mayoralty. By some this appointment was regarded as being somewhat of an experiment, owing to his brief period of public service; but he amply justified his selection for the highest honour in the bestowal of the Corporation by his extremely able and impartial rule, and at the end of his first year of office he was unanimously re-elected as Mayor.

Though, in the circumstances, he might reasonably have declined to undertake for a second year the very onerous duties of that high office, he readily consented to serve again, remarking that he had previously held aloof from public work because he felt he could best do his duty in that way; but now that he was free to undertake public duty he would endeavour to justify the great confidence the Corporation had reposed in him. Thus, with an intense love of the work he had undertaken, and a conscientious determination to do all that might reasonably be expected of him, Mr. Gill-Martin entered upon his second year's Mayoralty, supported by the cordial best wishes and grateful appreciation of his colleagues and the townspeople generally.

We cannot do better than quote the tribute paid last November to the late Mayor by the "Father of the Corporation", Mr. Councillor C. Salter, J.P., who said: "It is with the greatest pleasure that we reflect upon the part the Mayor has played in this town. As a teacher Mr. Martin has done valuable and lasting service in the educational work of the town. In a borough like this considerable claims are made upon the Mayor by the outside public for his attention, assistance, and patronage—his patronage is sought after quite as much as his sympathy—and we are bound to acknowledge that the Mayor had discharged his duties in no grudging way, but in such a manner as to reflect credit upon the Council and the town, as well as upon himself. There is no doubt that Mr. Martin's association with educational matters fitted him in a remarkable manner for the public duties he is now called upon to discharge, and I am sure the whole community has been pleased and satisfied with the way in which he has discharged those duties. He has the satisfaction of knowing that he has discharged his duties honestly, manfully, and without bias and extraneous influence, and praise is well merited by his devoted and patriotic discharge of that arduous public duty."

This generous tribute was cordially endorsed by the Council, who, with enthusiastic unanimity, accorded the late Mayor their best thanks for his highly appreciated services. The late Mayor was a strong advocate of the various improvements which have taken place, notably that at Snooks'-hill, and it was largely owing to his effective advocacy that the Corporation decided to throw in its lot with the Joint Isolation Hospital Board. Mr. Martin naturally found particularly congenial work as a member of the borough Education Committee, of which he was vice-chairman at the time of his death, and he was chairman of the Assessment Committee of the County Council. As the Chief Magistrate of the borough the late Mayor presided on the Bench with becoming dignity and marked ability and impartiality, and he was a regular attendant and valued colleague on the County Bench at Newport.

A man of culture and refinement, the late Mr. Martin warmly supported any movement for the intellectual advancement of those amongst whom he lived, particularly of the young people. He was one of the founders, and for many years a vice-president, of the Newport Literary Society, and he never tired in his efforts to make the Society's library as attractive and helpful as it was possible to make it.

The I.W. School Teacher's Association has lost a good friend by the death of one who had served in practically all offices and was ex-president of the Association and secretary of the Teachers' Provident Fund at the time of his decease. He was specially gratified that during his first year's Mayoralty he was able to preside at a meeting at which the President of the National Union of Teachers, and an old schoolmaster friend, gave an address on "Peace and Progress in Education".

He rendered good service to the musical life of the town by serving as secretary for some time of the old Choral Society, and he gave his valued support to the Philharmonic Society, which took its place. He was an ideal president of the Society of Devonians in the Isle of Wight, to which position he was re-elected about a month ago, when he presided at the annual dinner of the Society.

All manly sports and the clubs which foster them received the generous support of the late Mayor, who years ago was an ardent cyclist, and mounted on his “kangaroo” he was a familiar figure in the Island some time after the transition from the ordinary to the safety was complete. The Cycling, Football, Cricket, Rowing, and other Clubs claimed him as vice-president, and he was particularly interested in the annual school sports.

The late Mayor was also an enthusiastic horticulturalist who in his all too limited leisure delighted in tending his flower and fruit garden, and he was a valued supporter of the I.W. Carnation and Sweet-pea Society and of the Newport Chrysanthemum Society. Friendly Society work had in him an earnest supporter, and he was an hon. member of the Earl Yarboro’ Lodge of Oddfellows. Charitable institutions in our midst found in him a generous friend, and special mention should be made of his active support of the Newport Guild of Help and of his benevolent activities in connection with the Mayor’s soup kitchen.

Imbued with true patriotism, the late Mayor took a prominent part in the efforts which have been made of late to stimulate the recruiting for the Territorial Force, and it will be remembered that he presided with marked ability at the recent public meeting which was addressed by Lord Tennyson and General Sir Edward Hutton. Whilst a loyal and devout Churchman, the late Mayor evidenced broad-minded Christian sympathies, which prompted him to give kindly aid to other denominations who sought it.

He was chairman of the building committee for the new National-schools, and his enthusiastic and generous interest in this project was very encouraging to the managers. Politically the late Mayor was a staunch Conservative, who held his views firmly without giving offence to those on the opposite side. In private life his delightful amiability under all circumstances, his unflinching urbanity, and other personal excellences endeared him to all who had the privilege of his acquaintance. Mrs. Gill-Martin, who so splendidly supported her husband as Mayoress during the past 17 months, Dr. A. A. Martin, and the other relatives may be assured of the deepest sympathy of all classes of the community in their irreparable bereavement.

PULPIT TRIBUTES.

Half-muffled peals on the Parish-church bells before morning and evening service emphasised the feeling of melancholy which pervaded the town. At St. Thomas’s Church the “Dead-march” in *Saul* was played at the close of the morning service by Mr. Harry Cushing, A.R.C.O. Before commencing his sermon in the evening the Vicar (Rev. H. Edmund Sharpe)—who in the morning had exchanged pulpits with the Vicar of East Cowes—said: We meet today under the shadow of a great cloud of sorrow, in the removal from our midst by death of our Mayor. Few of us realised his illness was so critical and we hoped he would soon be once more well enough to discharge the duties, many and constant, belonging to the occupant of the civic chair. But it has been ordered otherwise and he has “crossed the bar” and “seen his Pilot face to face”. Earth has too few of those who conscientiously discharge their duties, with a single eye doing all, as an act of service to Almighty God, as an act of service to their fellow man.

It is this sense of duty which hallows and ennobles all work. It was in this noble spirit that our late Mayor did his work, reverently, justly, impartially, and all sweetened by charity. As head of this borough he set a splendid example of what the occupant of the civic chair should be, always at his post, always courteous and considerate to all whom he came into contact, generous in disposition, and full of good works. He humbly feared God and showed his faith by his regular attendance in the House of God, his

devout reception of the Sacrament, his testimony at public gatherings of the value of a simple trust in God, and to the happiness which comes from obedience to the Divine will.

He was in every sense a good man, a true Churchman, and a loyal citizen. It was ever his delight to do all he could to help forward God's cause in this town, and he now rests in the paradise of God, nearer to God, awaiting there, with the blessed departed, the final revelation of God. He was in a true sense a leader, and he led the way quietly, unobtrusively, but with a certain quiet determination, which carried weight and conviction, and helped the weak to be stronger and the timid to be brave. Let us strive to imitate his good example, and let us remember in her prayers those of his household who are stricken with grief, that they may be comforted, supported, and Divinely sustained in this hour of their anguish. "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more into the perfect day". "The memory of the just is ever blessed".

[Similar tributes were expressed in the morning services at the Wesleyan Chapel by superintendent minister Rev. A. Johnson; at the Congregational Church by the Rev. A. Jones (pastor); at the Thursday evening special Lent service at Newport Parish Church by the Rev. J. E. Eddie (vicar of Holy Trinity, Ryde); at the United Methodist Church on Sunday morning by the Rev. P. Cudmore (superintendent minister); at the Unitarian Christian Church by the Rev. James Ruddle; and at the Sunday afternoon's meeting of the St. Thomas's Men's Bible Class by the Vicar Rev. H. Edmund Sharpe but they were not transcribed]

THE FUNERAL.

Amid universal signs of mourning the mortal remains of the late Mayor were laid to rest in Newport Cemetery on Thursday afternoon. Business premises were closed at midday, instead of at the usual hour of 2 p.m., mourning shutters and drawn blinds were seen on every hand, and flags were at half-mast at the Guildhall and many other places in the town. Public thoroughfares in the neighbourhood of the Parish-church, where the first part of the service was held, and *en route* to the Cemetery were thronged with people, whose demeanour betokened the sorrow which has been predominant in Newport during the week.

Full civic honours were accorded at the last sad ceremony, the members of the Corporation attending in their robes, preceded by the maces covered with crepe, the Royal Governor's deputy, the civic chief of the sister borough, the heads of the principal public authorities of the Island, leading military officers, our citizen soldiers, representatives of the various public institutions, societies, and clubs, and all classes and creeds in public and private life, as well as teachers and scholars of the public schools, all united in one vast congregation, which filled St. Thomas's Church, to pay a fitting tribute to the departed. The whole solemn ceremony bore eloquent testimony to the general public recognition and appreciation of a noble life spent in devotion to duty—duty efficiently, tactfully, and pleasantly performed—and to the sincere regret at the loss of a citizen whose example was always a lofty one, and whose place it will indeed be most difficult adequately to fill. The members of the Corporation and magistrates and representatives of other public authorities assembled at the Guildhall, and here the civic procession which joined the cortege at the entrance to St. Thomas's-square, was marshalled under the direction of Councillors C. Webb and C. Steel.

The personal mourners were Dr. A. A. Martin (son), Mr. H. Fleming (brother-in-law), Mr. Robert Bullen, J.P. (an old Devonian friend), Dr. M. L. B. Coombs, J.P., and Dr. Stanley Foster. Then came Town-Sergeant Osborn and Mr. E. Matthews bearing the borough maces draped in crepe, preceded by the police, headed by Insp. T. Cass and Salter. The Deputy Governor of the Island (Mr. Thomas B. H. Cochrane, M.V.O.), followed, representing, by special command, the Royal Governor, Princess Henry of Battenberg, and with him walked the senior Alderman of the borough, Ald. Francis Pittis, J.P. The senior

magistrate, Mr. Robey F. Eldridge, J.P., and the Mayor of Ryde, Mr. Michael Maybrick, J.P. (wearing his badge of office tied with black ribbon), walked next, and there followed Messrs. R. Roach Pittis, J.P., Robert Pinnock, J.P., F. T. Mew, J.P., J. Thomas, J.P., G. B. Purkis, J.P., R. Bird Cheverton, J.P., C. Salter, J.P., J. W. Stanley, J.P., W. J. Whittington, J.P., E. Morris, J.P., A. J. Snellgrove, J.P., and Harry Sheppard, J.P.; Aldermen G. D. Rich, W. W. Clark, and T. S. Buckler;

[Due to the extremely long list of other borough and Corporation attendees, only the high level groups are mentioned here: Town Councillors; Town Clerks; Borough Auditors; Inspectors; Collectors; Overseers; Fire Brigade; Ambulance; various heads of County Committees; representatives of all local churches; representatives of various military organizations; heads of various Island clubs and Societies; heads of schools, teachers unions, and student groups; representatives of various community Boards; and key local businesses]

The Service In Church

During the assembly of the large congregation Mr. H. Cushing, A.R.C.O., the organist, played “Angels, ever bright and fair”, “O rest in the Lord”, “Blest are the departed”, and other appropriate music. The seating arrangements were carried out by Mr. Churchwarden D. F. Ritchie, Mr. E. F. King (who acted as churchwarden in the room of Capt. C. Hills, absent through regretted indisposition), and Messrs. H. Tullidge, A. E. Cave, E. O. White, and H. Lower, each of whom carried wands bound with black. The funeral procession was met at the west door by the choir and clergy, the latter including the Rev. H. Edmund Sharpe (vicar of Newport), the Rev. W. J. Stobart (vicar of Carisbrooke), the Rev. W. H. Nutter (vicar of St. Paul’s, Barton), the Rev. A. H. C. Edlin (chaplain to the Forces at Parkhurst), the Rev. Miles Atkinson (in charge of the new district of Wooton-bridge), and the Rev. C. C. Sharpe (curate of Newport).

The opening sentences of the Burial Office were recited by the Vicar of Carisbrooke. Psalm xc. was sung to a single chant by the Rev. C. A. Wickes. The Rev. W. H. Nutter able read the lesson. After the singing of the hymn “How bright those glorious spirits shine”, the Vicar of Newport intoned the concluding prayers of the service. Those were followed by the hymn “Now the labourer’s task is o’er”. The organist played the “Dead march” in *Saul* as the body was removed from the church.

The Mayor’s seat in the Corporation stalls was left vacant during the funeral, the seats on either side being occupied by the Deputy Governor, Ald. Pittis, the Mayor of Ryde, and Mr. Robey Eldridge. Many of those in the church, including the school boys, joined the procession on the way to the grave, at which the Vicar of Newport read the committal prayers. The coffin, which was of polished elm with brass mounts, bore the inscription:—

Gill Martin,
Died March 21, 1909,
Aged 66.

There were nearly 50 exquisitely beautiful floral tributes, and an extra carriage was necessary to take the many for which room could not be found in the hearse. [The key ones were from] his sorrowful wife (a white harp with manve chords, one of which was broken); with Alex’s love (Dr. Martin); in loving memory of our dear daddy, from Kathleen and Frank (floral heart); his loving sister and niece, Lottie; Herbert and Amy; May; Aunt Pollie; Pollie, Ethel, and Jim; Eddie, Alice, and children; Robert Bullen; Mr. R. Roach Pittis; Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Cave and family; Mr. and Mrs. Warder; Mrs. Loth, Southsea; Mr. and Mrs. Benbow, Shanklin; Fanny; Mabel Humber; E. M. Harwood, Plymouth; Ald. and Mrs. Francis Pittis; Col. Howard-Brooke; Mr. and Miss Chappell; Mr. and Mrs. Frank T. Mew; the Deputy Governor of the Isle of Wight and Lady Adela Cochrane (Carisbrooke Castle); ...

[For brevity, the remainder were not transcribed but included those from borough Justices; Aldermen and Councillors and officials of the Corporation; members of the Devonian Society; teachers and students from various schools; members of various Clubs, Associations, and Societies most of which were mentioned earlier]

PUBLIC TRIBUTES.

[Many of the same organizations mentioned earlier, who were closely associated with the Mayor, made public tributes in the form of resolutions of condolence and sympathy at their next official meetings following the funeral and these were included but too lengthy and repetitive to include here. As the Mayor was the chief magistrate of the Newport Borough Justices, it was felt that their resolution and comments at their subsequent meeting should be included as representative of the many others]

Mr. Robey Eldridge [chairman] said in the very exceptional circumstances in which they met he was sure they all desired to express at the earliest moment their deep sense of regret that the borough had lost by death one who was so gifted and so fitted in every way to carry out the duties of chief magistrate of the borough, and they all felt that the way in which he carried out those duties was beyond praise. The Mayor was one for whom they all had a great feeling not only of esteem but of affection, and with those who were bereaved they desired to express their sincere condolence on the sad and sudden loss, which they, in common with all inhabitants of the borough, had sustained. He begged to propose the following resolution: "That the justices desire to express to the Mayoress, Mrs. Gill-Martin, and the other members of the family of the late Mayor their sincere sympathy and condolence in this sad bereavement, and they also desire to record their deep feeling of the loss which the borough has sustained through his death and their high appreciation of the conspicuous ability with which he has carried out the duties of chief magistrate of the borough during the last year and a half."

Transcription by Ian Roach for the Friends of Newport & Carisbrooke Cemeteries © 2021
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