



Founded 1926

HISTORY WEST

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November 2015

GENERAL MEETING

The next meeting at Stirling House is on Wednesday 18 November at 6pm.

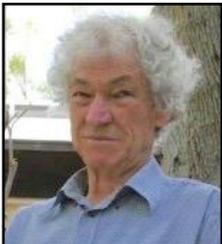
Dr Bob Reece will present a paper entitled **Yagan and Other Prominent Swan River Aborigines.**

Refreshments available from 5.30pm; Bookshop open until 6pm

In recent years, Yagan has become a hero figure for the descendants of the original Aboriginal owners of Swan River and a by-word for their response to British settlement of Swan River Colony in the years after June 1829. They see him as a resistance figure ('freedom fighter', if you like) who offered armed opposition to the settlers, their expropriation without compensation of traditional lands and their disdain for an ancient Aboriginal culture. Aboriginal society lacked any political hierarchy, but Yagan represented a new form of leadership. Fearful of his violent exploits which saw him declared an outlaw with a price on his head, the small and vulnerable settler population heaved a collective sigh of relief in 1833 when news came that he had been treacherously shot by a thirteen year old boy for the reward.

The emergence of Aboriginal people on to the national political stage after the 1967 referendum accelerated the need for Aboriginal hero figures who could symbolise resistance to European settler dominance both in the past and the present. In Western Australia, Yagan was a familiar figure but the erection of a bronze statue in his honour on Heirisson Island in 1984 raised his profile in more than the obvious way.

From a fresh examination of the contemporary sources, this paper will offer a perspective on Yagan (and by extension other notable Swan River Aboriginal figures of his time) that will hopefully assist us in seeing him as he was rather than what he has become.



Dr Bob Reece is Professor Emeritus in History at Murdoch University. His first publications were in Aboriginal History, notably *Aborigines and Colonists* (1974) and 'Inventing Aborigines' (1987). This interest was also pursued in 'The Irish and the Aborigines' (2000) and a biography of Daisy Bates (2007). More recently he has published articles on the history of the Benedictine Aboriginal mission at New Norcia, as well as *The Invincibles: New Norcia's Aboriginal Cricketers 1879-1906* (2014). He has also published extensively on the history of Sarawak (Borneo).

Mystery Photo

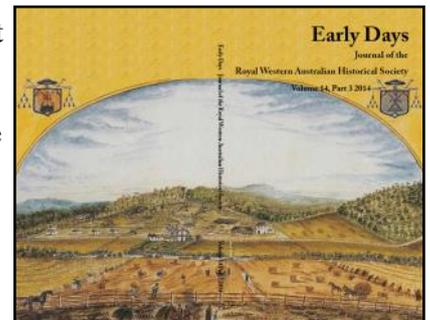
Another photograph from the **Bird Family** album. If you can identify these children, please phone and ask for the Library, on 9386 3841, or email library@histwest.org.au



The new issue of our annual journal – *Early Days* 2014

– will be launched at 5pm in the foyer of Stirling House on 18 November before the General Meeting.

Do come along to celebrate with the editor and authors.



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Culture and the Arts**



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Council News

At its meeting held on 8 October items of business included the following where Council

welcomed new members: – Constance Teague, Mary Walsh

- recorded with pleasure that voting members of the Society now total 767, and that, while 18 members have resigned in the last year, 35 have joined;
- elected Lennie McCall as Chair and Helen Henderson as Deputy Chair of Council for the year 2015-16;
- resolved to hold an Open Day at Stirling House on Sunday 15 November;
- welcomed the news of two successful grant applications – from Lotterywest for website re-development and from the WA History Foundation for the conservation and digitising of early photographs;
- applauded the success of the Royal Show exhibition and expressed gratitude for the many volunteers who were involved;
- discussed the Society's views on the Heritage Bill (2015).

Lennie McCall

History in the City

At our well-attended meeting on 7 October, Yvonne Geneve took us on a fascinating journey of the picture palaces of earlier times in her talk on Art Deco Picture Palaces of the Golden West. Few of these remain today.

We viewed the history of our State through the wonderful country picture theatres and relived the memories of actors from the past.

Yvonne reminded us of Minnie and Mickey Mouse, Joe E. Brown, the serial 'Flash Gordon' and Felix the Cat, the creation of Australian-born cartoonist, Pat Sullivan.

Quite often, adjoining suburbs shared the films and there was a dash at interval to exchange films for the rest of the show. How times have changed!



Our final talk for 2015 is on Wednesday 2 December when Tricia Fairweather will speak on Brideships to WA in the 19th Century.

Lorraine Tholet

Mapping Memory:

family, place and contemporary art

Every family has stories to tell, and each story is a part of our state's heritage.



The Mapping Memory online exhibition is launched

In 2011 the Royal WA Historical Society collaborated with the State Library of WA to mount a major three-month exhibition in the State Library's gallery, curated by our Hon. Artist in Residence, Wendy Lugg. *Mapping Memory* brought together artefacts from these two heritage major collections, with Wendy's artworks and family memorabilia to tell stories of life in Western Australia in the first half of the 20th century.

Four years later, this award-winning exhibition has been remounted online to inspire interest in family history and encourage exploration of how family stories connect to and enrich broader West Australian history.

A big crowd turned out at the State Library on 27 August for the official launch of the *Mapping Memory* online exhibition.

You can view the exhibition at <http://slwa.wa.gov.au/mappingmemory/>

Photographs courtesy of the State Library of Western Australia.

Out and About at the Royal Show

This year the Show was blessed with near perfect weather. The National Archives joined us in the building together with WAGS with displays of photos and historical documents.



Our Museum committee created a wonderful display of children's toys and items from early life. One object that was definitely not amusing was a teacher's cane. There would not be many men from earlier times who did not get a whack or two from this diabolical punishment instrument! I remember getting two 'cuts' for flying a paper aeroplane in the schoolyard when it was forbidden.



South Perth Zoo, 1950s
m2014_839 RWAHS

The photo display this year featured the Perth Zoo and Perth's water supply dams in overflow. As well as many photos on general subjects, one panel was devoted to the naming of Perth suburbs. A portrait from the RWAHS collection was married to a

brief description of how the person came to have a suburb named after them. It proved an interesting feature and an SBS reporter and a school educator left messages that they would like to use the material in their own work. Thanks to our two (unrelated) Sullivans, Marsha and Barry, for putting the information together. Thanks also to Dave Melvin for working overtime to complete photo labels on time when computer glitches threatened to derail the process.

It was very pleasing to see the Show volunteer schedule fill up quickly this year. Many thanks to everyone!

The following comments indicate how much the public appreciates the efforts of all concerned:

From Tina Baxter, Margaret River – 'Amazing. Thank you very much for the wonderful history'.

From Doreen, Armadale – 'First time looking in 25 years. Wish I had been before. Fascinating and informative. Nice chats too'.

From John of Freo – 'A great exhibition, very informative'.

Kerry Eivers, Community Exhibitions Team

A provocative lecture:

Cultural Futures in an Age of Digital Disruption



In the **2015 Geoffrey Bolton Lecture**, Kim Williams AM (media executive, arts and culture administrator, composer and author) analysed the age of disruption in which we now live. 'The world is not changing. It already has', he insisted, referring to the overwhelming transformation brought to all parts of society by the uptake of new digital technologies. 'Change is the "new normal".'

He pointed to the unprecedented shift in power from producers to consumers, undermining established businesses, politics, and social and cultural authorities. In this world, he said, 'disintermediation is the name of the game... [that is] the reduction in the use of intermediaries in transactions between producers and consumers'. Social media is central to this new world.

Developments in data collection, storage and analysis — known collectively as 'big data' — are transforming business and consumer horizons. The best-known use of big data is in *search*. 'The application of *search* in all things from jokes to physics, real estate to recipes, employment to games, means that we all now think differently'.

Kim Williams stressed the need for governments, businesses and all established organisations to 'listen and learn'. 'There are two major currencies in the "new normal" — time and trust. We need not to waste customers' time and we'd better ensure that there is an umbilical cord of trust on which they can rely'.

So what is the message for our Society? As a community organisation we already know the importance of reaching out and listening to our members and the wider public. We are trying to be more agile in applying new technologies to the work of the Society and, with our new website now beginning to take shape, we can plan for a more active and lively life online. 'Do Not Be Bland!' 'Be Bold!' Be active and collaborative! Well, we are trying.

The annual lecture is hosted by State Archivist, Cathrin Cassarichis, and the State Records Office in honour of Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton. It took place on 6 October in Government House Ballroom and Minister John Day MLA introduced the speaker. This year, for the first time, Professor Bolton was not present to respond to the address. Geoff always grasped new challenges and he would have enjoyed Kim Williams' analysis of the disruption to the settled order being wrought by new digital technologies. The Hon. Nicholas Hasluck responded excellently in Geoff's place.

Library News

The Diaries of Edmund Cecil Clifton (1883-1971)

1897 1st January Friday
Here has another year slipped by I have written no diary, (except in holidays) therefore, before it is too late, I am writing one now.

These are the opening words, written by thirteen-year-old Edmund Cecil Clifton, in the first of a series of 42 diaries. They span the years 1897-1968 and are a significant part of a voluminous quantity of material, belonging to Edmund Clifton, given to the Society by Edmund's grandson, Jeremy Buxton.



Margaret Brinsden, one of our Library volunteers, began a project to document the diaries about twelve months ago and her work gives us an insight into the character of the writer, his life and family, and an idea of contemporary society.

Edmund was a scrupulous diarist and rarely missed a day's entry during much of his life, although in later years his routine became spasmodic and even a little confused.

The eldest of the eleven children of Robert Cecil and Rose Louisa Clifton, he was surrounded by a large circle of family members, relatives and friends. He experienced few dramatic events during his life, and the minutiae and routines described in his diaries reflect this relative calm.

Saturday 27th July. After office did scrapbook. Same all the afternoon. Sang before tea. Charades this evening. Billie, John, & Rosie being here besides Bob. A great dressing up & Billie very funny. Mother had tea at Aunt Lou's. Still very wet.

These excerpts are typical of the diaries' content. They record the routine of his working life at the Lands Department, activities after work, the daily return to the family home, domestic duties, a variety of social activities and personal thoughts and concerns. They are full of references to family members and accounts of the constant interaction with immediate and extended family and their many friends and acquaintances.

The preoccupations of office life include the daily concern to balance the books, who has which staff position, who has been promoted and, of course, how much he was paid.

Tuesday 30th July 1908: Payday, but not increased salary, as I had hoped.

His salary was apparently not very handsome and he refers frequently to difficulties with money matters. We note the connection between his mimeograph (an early copier) and the state of his finances. He pawns the mimeograph one week to obtain money to acquit pressing debts and then a few weeks later redeems it.

The pattern is repeated and the mimeograph spends much time visiting the pawnshop.

Most diarists reveal elements of their personality and character, and Edmund was no exception. In general, he seems to have been an agreeable man who interacted well with those around him, especially his family. For example, he shows a tender side to his nature when he reads to his younger siblings.

Friday 5th June: Pretty tired. After woodchopping & piemaking this afternoon, I read Beatrix Potter Books to Philip, Kittie & Ben by the fire. But before that I read some Anthony & Cleopatra & had a snooze in the Drawing room.

At the same time, the occasional tart or sarcastic remark about a person or an action shows a sharper side to his nature.

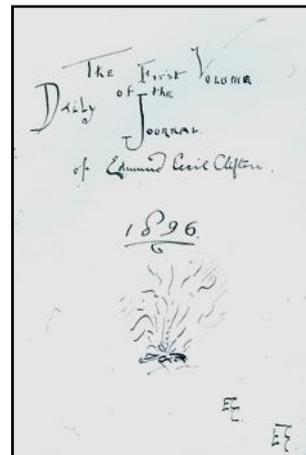
He can turn his hand to practical matters, such as seeing to the lamps, making furniture, hanging paintings, gardening and so on. At the same time we find a man with considerable artistic interests. Scattered throughout are many references to books, music and films. He spends much of his limited salary on the purchase of books, which sometimes proves an embarrassment but he seems unable to resist. Early in life he tried his hand at writing. He and his friends and relatives go to many concerts, films and the occasional ballet. He seems to have been a good pianist and the diaries are full of references to his delight in classical music.

The First World War interrupts the relatively peaceful tenor of life. He feels excitement as troops march through the city but then tension as he watches his brothers enlist, undergo training and leave for the front. Then follows the greater anxiety as the family waits for news. Finally, there is the brief report of the death of his brother, George.

The second event which alters the flow of life is his marriage to Trixie Orchard in 1915. They have a daughter Penelope Anne and both live to great ages.

Edmund was an early member of the Society, so we are very pleased to house his diaries today.

Jill Maughan, Hon. Librarian



Museum News

A doily with a story to tell



This doily on display in our current exhibition *Beyond the Battlefields, humble objects, powerful stories* is certainly a humble object which tells a powerful story.

It was embroidered by Sapper Fred Lee after his return from war. Fred had begun to embroider while recuperating from injuries in England and continued with the hobby for the rest of his life.

His daughter Dorothy Lee told this story about her father:

After dinner each evening, it was Fred's practice to lie down on the couch. War Wounds, he often explained. Lying on his back with a bamboo hoop securing the material he pressed the small needle in and out filling in the leaves and flowers of the design with the appropriate threads.

The doctor who operated on Sapper Fred Lee after he was wounded while repairing telegraph lines on the Somme near Corby in France in June 1918 was a surgeon by name of Gordon Gordon-Taylor. His expertise was in abdominal surgery and it is felt that through his expertise he saved the life of my father. After spending six months in hospital recuperating in England, Fred was moved down to Weymouth where by now he was able to take walks along the sea front. Eventually he was shipped home to Australia and discharged from the Army in February 1919. He was just 22 years of age when wounded and not long turned 23 when he returned home. Fred lived a normal family life. Wed on the 18th of

December 1920 and the marriage produced four children: a son and three daughters.

Somehow Fred Lee managed to keep in contact with the surgeon who operated on him during World War I. During the Second World War it was the family's habit to send food parcels over to relatives living in England and Scotland. Fred thought the Dr might also like a food parcel. By this time Gordon-Taylor was a Harley Street Specialist and had also been knighted by the Queen. Fred's wife Annie, not one to promote herself, thought that a man with Sir in front of his name would not be in need of food parcels, but Fred explained that the Dr would be rationed in England just like anyone else – besides, said Fred, "He saved my life". Sir Gordon received his food parcel.

Sir Gordon did a lot of medical lecturing and travelled to many conferences. In 1952 he stayed over in Perth for a short while on his way to Sydney for a conference. This gave the opportunity for the two men to meet and Sir Gordon was invited to our home for a meal. My mother, a timid soul, was nervous to be hostess for such an occasion but when she met Sir Gordon and discovered that he was a Scotsman, as she herself was a Scotswoman, all of her nervousness disappeared. The Doctor was a true gentleman and the visit went well. Then Sir Gordon asked Fred if he could look at the injury where he had operated back in 1918 – 34 years ago. The two men went up to the bedroom and the Dr said to Fred "Hop up on the couch", in this case the bed, and the surgeon had the opportunity of seeing the results of his handiwork of so long ago – a long scar from the breast bone right down the middle of Fred's abdomen. It would be doubtful if Sir Gordon would get the chance to see many – if any – of the soldiers on whom he operated so long ago.

Please note that the Beyond the Battlefields exhibition has been extended until 21 December. Do take advantage of this extra time if you have not already visited the exhibition.

Val Hutch

Affiliates News

Busselton Historical Society members are busy restoring items for display, including the construction of a wooden dray horse to be fitted with original harness and other tack.

To commemorate 75 Years of Ord Irrigation in 2016, the **Kununurra Historical Society** website has been updated to include a document published in 1941 by Kimberley Michael Durack at the age of 24, titled 'Developing the North – Proposed Research Station for the Kimberleys.' See <http://www.kununurra.org.au/khs-news>

President Andrew Barker reports that 2016 will mark a number of anniversaries –

15 years that KHS has been in the 'new' Kununurra Museum building; □

30 years since the inauguration of the Kununurra Historical Society - June 5th 1986;

55 years since Kununurra was gazetted a town - February 11th 1962;

70 years since the establishment of the Kimberley Research Station - June 21st 1946 (1st Water); □

75 years since KM Durack proposed a Research Station for the Kimberley - March 31st 1941; □

75 years since the first Research Station at Carlton Reach became a reality - November 1941;

130 years since the Halls Creek Gold-rush and the establishment of Wyndham in April 1886.

Kalamunda & Districts Historical Society reports a busy year with 13,000 visitors to its museum among other activities. Partnering with the Shire of Kalamunda, the Society has developed a self-guided Kalamunda Town Site Heritage Walk Trail with free brochure and map as well as free app. Walk trails are an increasingly popular way to interest and inform visitors, so this is a valuable initiative for the district. For more details see – <http://www.kalamundahistoricalociety.com>

Peelers Gazette, the **WA Police Historical Society** newsletter, tells the story of William Conroy who was executed for wilful murder in 1887. He left his property in Fitzgerald St to the Sisters of Mercy and they built St Brigid's Convent on the land.

Rockingham District Historical Society will commemorate the Armstrong family in a Pioneer Memorial Service at the East Rockingham Cemetery on 8 November. Adam Armstrong arrived in the colony with his six children in December 1829, engaged as an accountant and surveyor by Thomas Peel.

Walpole Nornalup and District Historical Society held the 85th Anniversary Reunion of the Walpole Land Settlement Scheme over the first weekend of October. The Society produced a booklet titled *85 Years in the Making* for the occasion. There were many activities on offer, including an art award presentation, photographic exhibition and other displays, church

service, 85th anniversary golf trophy, walks and scenic drives, as well as community and family reunions.

Congratulations to the **Royal Historical Society of Qld** (RHSQ) on publishing the 800th issue of its Bulletin, the first appearing in April 1942. The Society reports that today one of its most important activities is hosting Year 5 school children on tours of the Commissariat Store as part of the new schools curriculum which requires an understanding of Australia's convict heritage. The Commissariat Store Museum is the initiative of the RHSQ and is staffed by volunteers from the Society. The most significant exhibit is the building itself. It is said to be Queensland's oldest habitable and most significant heritage building, the lower two floors being built by convicts in 1828-1829.

The RWAHS's Museum and Library have a vitally important reminder for us all as possessors of a lifetime of personal family and community photographs – don't forget to catalogue them! Then future generations will know who is in the photo; who those pictured are related to; and when, where and why the photo was taken. Many of us have family photographs we cannot identify. Don't do it to your descendants!

Open Day
Sunday 15 November, 1 – 4pm
*Beyond the Battlefields... humble objects,
powerful stories.*

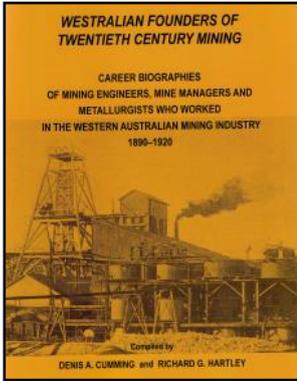


Last weekend viewing opportunity before the exhibition closes. At 2pm there will be a floor talk by exhibition curator Wendy Lugg.



Shelf Help

Denis A. Cumming & Richard G. Hartley (compilers), *Westralian Founders of Twentieth Century Mining. Career biographies of mining engineers, mine managers and metallurgists who worked in the Western Australian mining industry 1890-1920*, Richard G. Hartley, Rossmoyn, 2014, xxviii + 190pp. In Library



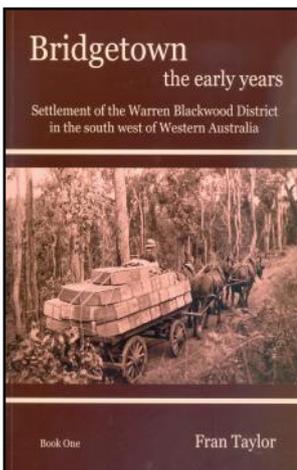
Don't forget to note this valuable reference work, for it is a rich compendium of professional biographies of those powerful mining technologists of WA's first gold boom, 306 of them in all. Here are the managers and metallurgists who shaped goldfields history. Some are famous names –

Herbert Hoover, Claude de Bernales, Charles Kaufman, Richard Hamilton, Zebina Lane, A.E. Morgans and such like – others not so much. If your research has left you wondering about these significant but remote figures who cross your path, then here is your source for correct information.

BOOK REVIEWS

Fran Taylor, *Bridgetown the early years: settlement of the Warren Blackwood District from the 1850s*, Book 1, Frances Taylor, Bridgetown, 2014, 206pp. In Library.

Reviewer: Ruth Marchant James



Most of us remember with pleasure visits to the charming southwest township of Bridgetown. Regardless of whether you are a tourist passing through or a long-term resident, it is impossible not to be impressed by the natural beauty of the countryside with its fertile river valleys and scenic waterways. Readers of Fran Taylor's book will be equally impressed by the

information she provides in its sixteen chapters, which show her interest in history and close relationship with the district and community.

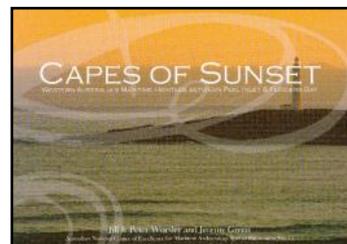
An excellent selection of photographs accompanies the text, which begins with the story of the original inhabitants – the Noongars. Easy-to-read chapters cover the arrival of the pastoralists and establishment of outstations, the gradual development of the town and the formation of roads boards and other institutions.

Of interest is Chapter 4, under the title 'Bridges over the Blackwood', which recounts the story of the five bridges built over a long period at Geegelup/Bridgetown. Early farming and machinery also rate a chapter, as does the timber industry, transport, the railway and essential services. Community involvement includes local schools and the pioneering efforts of well-known midwives, doctors and hospitals as well as the establishment of shops, businesses, hotels and guesthouses. Likewise, the leisurely side of country life is not neglected and a section of the book is devoted to pastimes enjoyed in an earlier era.

The book is neatly divided into organised chapters with the subject matter listed in the Contents pages. This readable publication, however, suffers from the lack of an index and one glaring error on page 9, which states that 'Western Australia was established in 1827', instead of 1829.

Jill & Peter Worsley and Jeremy Green, *Capes of Sunset: Western Australian Maritime Heritage Between Peel Inlet & Flinders Bay*, Australian National Centre of Excellence for Maritime Archaeology, Fremantle, Special Publication No 15, 2012.

Reviewer: Ian Berryman



Capes of Sunset is a sequel to *A Windswept Coast*, by the Worsleys and David Totty. The earlier volume described shipwrecks which occurred on the coast of Western

Australia between the mouth of the Moore River and the Zuytdorp Cliffs; *Capes of Sunset* describes wrecks occurring between the Peel Inlet and Flinders Bay.

The new book maintains the high standards of its predecessor. The research has been extensive, and has utilised many diverse sources, from books published in the 19th century, to articles in academic and specialist journals. The authors also cite many unpublished reports and essays which are held by the Maritime Museum.

The book includes 340 illustrations, some from the nineteenth century, others photographs taken by divers from the Maritime Museum who were investigating the wrecks. There are also drawings and sketches by Ross Shardlow.

Pages 1 to 304 contain descriptions of the wrecks. The next section (pp. 307-380), titled 'Maritime Trades and Industry', will be a valuable source for anyone studying the economic and social history of the South West, since it describes the activities of the colonists in

agriculture, grazing, mining, timber, whaling and fishing.

There is also a glossary, and an illustrated list of the different rigs of sailing ships. Most of us are familiar with the terms 'barque', 'ketch', 'schooner' etc, but do not know the precise layout of the masts and sails, and it is useful to have explanations, accompanied by sketches.

The format of the book is A4 landscape, with the text printed in three columns. While the layout is appropriate for a book with so many illustrations, it does mean that, when opened out, the book is 600 mm wide and 210 high, making it an awkward object to handle.

Capes of Sunset is a fine book, which will be an indispensable reference work for all who study the history of Western Australia.

Diary Dates

Friday 13 November: Frederick Bell VC Memorial Lecture at the Cottesloe Civic Centre at 6pm. Shannon Lovelady will speak about the **Gallipoli Dead from Western Australia: Naming Those Lost**. RSVP to cdo@cottesloe.wa.gov.au or 9285 5000.

Sun 15 November, 1 – 4pm: Open Day – *Beyond the Battlefields... humble objects, powerful stories*

Thurs 3 December: Booked in for a Cuppa – Christmas Edition

Fri 11 December: Members' Christmas Party

Administrative Officer : Lynn O'Hara
Assistant Admin Officer : Lesley Burnett
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