

# Ramsbottom Urban District Council



1913 - 1969

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Cover Illustration: TTD386H was the last front-engined Leyland to be produced. It is seen here at Ramsbottom depot wearing its SELNEC fleet number of 6411. (LTHL collection).

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Ramsbottom UDC had been considering some form of local transport since the end of the 19th century and, in 1903, obtained powers to construct a tramway within the district. However, the requirements of the 1903 Tramways Act, made it necessary to reconstruct certain roads, rebuild a bridge and remove a level crossing, which would have imposed a financial burden on the small UDC that the local Council could not possibly have hoped to meet. Previous proposals for a tramway, promoted by the Lancashire Light Railway Company to connect Blackburn to Manchester (via Rawtenstall and Ramsbottom, under the lofty name of the Turton, Tottington, Ramsbottom and Rawtenstall Light Railway) had come to nothing. In consequence, a suggestion was made to neighbouring Bury Corporation that they might look favourably on extending existing lines to form a circular route through Ramsbottom, but after much heated debate nothing materialised and Ramsbottom never had a tramway system (although the depot carried the inscription 'Ramsbottom Tramways'). Instead the Council turned its attention to railless traction, then being pioneered by other local authorities.

A Council meeting on 11 January 1912 agreed that a Bill for powers to operate trolleybuses over the roads authorised by the previous Tramways Order (which was due to expire in August 1912 if the specified works were not by then completed) should be presented in the next Parliamentary session. The Bill received the Royal Assent on 25 June 1912 as the Ramsbottom Urban District Council Railless Traction Act and authorised

the use of trackless vehicles over the routes previously specified for tramcars. The order also contained a proviso that the trackless routes could be converted to tramway operation at a later date, such was the faith in the ultimate supremacy of the tramcar!

The initial route was from the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway's Holcombe Brook Station along Bolton Road West, Bolton Street, Market Place, Ramsbottom Lane, Stubbins Lane, Bolton Road North, Bury Road to Market Street, Edenfield, where it terminated. A short spur diverted a few hundred yards down Bridge Street to Ramsbottom Station, although this was discontinued as early as October 1914. At the same time, land was set aside on Stubbins Lane for the construction of a six-car depot and workshop, built at a cost of £1898.

The total cost of the installation was £13,350 and it was calculated that a weekly income of £68 would be required for the system to pay.

A fare of 3d was to be charged for the whole length of the route from Holcombe Brook to Edenfield (a distance of three and a half miles) with shorter journeys being charged at one halfpenny for two stages and one penny for four stages. Stages were approximately at quarter mile intervals.

Early in 1913, an order for four vehicles was placed with the Railless Traction Company Limited. Powered by two 20hp English Electric motors,

they were operated by tram-style hand controllers. The chassis were supplied to the Railless Company by David Brown of Huddersfield and the bodies were constructed by Milnes Voss, with seating for 28 passengers who entered via an open platform at the rear. The first trackless vehicle was delivered on Sunday 10 August 1913, having been towed from Leeds and a trial run was organised for the following morning. On 14 August, a Board of Trade inspection took place and the line was approved for operation. That evening, at 6pm, the line was opened for public service. The following day the second trolleybus arrived and by the end of the following week the order was complete.

The fleet itself consisted of 7 Railless vehicles numbered 1-7. Registration of trolleybuses did not become compulsory until 1921 so they ran without registration plates until then. The original four vehicles by Milnes Voss had six windows (although later and re-bodied vehicles appear to have had 5) and an open platform to the rear. The name 'Ramsbottom Urban District Council' was applied to the lower panels but this was later replaced with the Ramsbottom coat-of-arms. The maximum weight when loaded was 5 tons. The seating capacity was 28 on transverse seating. Motive power was by direct chain drive from two 20 h.p. motors and series parallel controllers. No. 7 appears to have had just a single motor. Electrical equipment was by Siemens and the bodies by Milnes Voss and Lockwood and Clarkson.

Not surprisingly the combination of solid tyres and the town's granite setts caused severe vibrations when the vehicles were in operation and the bodies needed replacing after just two years. In order to facilitate the repairs a further two vehicles were purchased from the Railless Company in 1915. The original four trolleybuses were then rebodied by Lockwood and Clarkson over the next few years. A further new vehicle arrived in 1922, again nominally built by the Railless Company, but actually manufactured by Thornycroft. By 1923 the trolleybuses needed rebuilding once more, with new chassis and bodies again being supplied by the Railless Company.

Around the middle of 1923, Ramsbottom UDC inaugurated a motorbus route connecting the trolleybus terminus at Edenfield with the Railway Station at Rawtenstall. On the 1 September 1924, the route was taken over by Rawtenstall Corporation (as well as two of the Thornycroft buses - Nos. 9 and 10). This route was subsequently extended into neighbouring Bury, connecting with the Rawtenstall to Burnley (Summit) route of Rawtenstall Corporation providing a through service between Bury and Burnley, and on 21 November 1924, the three municipalities commenced operating the route jointly.

By October 1924, the Council had indicated their desire to dispense with the trolleybus service altogether, which by now was operating for only part of the day. Motorbuses were being used for the remainder of the time.

In 1925 the Council decided to promote a new Bill in Parliament in order to obtain wider powers to operate motorbuses. The new Bill was subsequently passed as the Ramsbottom UDC Act of 1926 and sounded the death knell for the troublesome trolleybuses.

In November 1926, a through service between Bury and Rawtenstall, via Holcombe Brook and Ramsbottom (jointly with Bury and Rawtenstall Corporations) began, part of which followed the route of the trolleybus service. From then on the trolleybuses made only rare appearances (although all had been officially withdrawn by 1928, the last trolleybus actually ran on the 31 March 1931, the event passing without ceremony).

The joint service from Bury to Burnley (Summit) was withdrawn on 31 March 1932 under orders from the newly created Traffic Commissioners and was replaced by a truncated route between Bury and Rawtenstall. Although Ramsbottom remained a joint operator, in practice the service was run solely by Bury and Rawtenstall Corporations. Ramsbottom UDC confined itself to operating on the route via Holcombe Brook, along with short workings and local services to Edenfield via Shuttleworth, and to Holcombe Village. These services were operated throughout the lifetime of the undertaking and apart from changes in frequency, remained basically unaltered until the UDC was swallowed up by SELNEC in 1969.

Although the early vehicles were of Thornycroft manufacture, Leylands were chosen for the new deliveries in 1927 and thereafter all the UDC's new purchases were manufactured by Leyland (the only non-Leyland being a second-hand Albion Nimbus in December 1967, purchased for the Holcombe Village working, where, because of the narrow roads, buses had to turn on the local pub car park, precluding the use of larger vehicles).

Until 1947 all Ramsbottom vehicles were single-deck because of the low height of the bridge at Stubbins railway station, but in this year the roadway was lowered underneath the bridge giving sufficient clearance for double-deck vehicles. The first double-deck vehicles were six all-Leyland PD2's, delivered late in 1947, among some of the earliest examples of the type and gave sterling service. No. 21 lasted almost 22 years and actually passed into SELNEC ownership, albeit as a withdrawn vehicle. In 1950 Ramsbottom received three Roe B44F-bodied Leyland Royal Tigers, the first of the type to be used as service buses by any operator.

Ramsbottom was administered by Lancashire County Council until boundary changes in 1974 brought it under the control of Greater Manchester County Council, and, along with near neighbours Rawtenstall and Haslingden, had contemplated forming a jointly operated undertaking. For several years the three undertakings shared the same General Manager, but when the Rossendale Joint Transport Committee was finally formed in April 1968, Ramsbottom decided to go it alone. Sadly, however, Ramsbottom UDC's



independence was not to be long lived, for, on 1 November 1969, it was taken over by SELNEC.

Although the undertaking no longer existed, Ramsbottom UDC still had another page to write in the history books. A few days after the takeover by SELNEC, the very last front-engined Leyland vehicle to roll off the production line was delivered. It carried Ramsbottom livery, fleet number and coat of arms and had the distinction of being the only brand new half-cab vehicle to be operated by a Passenger Transport Executive. Today it survives in preservation, a lasting memorial to over 55 years of Ramsbottom UDC Transport Department, although it never actually operated in service for Ramsbottom.

## Trolleybus Fleet List 1913-1931

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Reg.No; Chassis; Chassis No; Body; Seating.

### 1913

1	-	Railless Electric Traction	??	Milnes Voss	B28R
2	-	Railless Electric Traction	??	Milnes Voss	B28R
3	-	Railless Electric Traction	??	Milnes Voss	B28R
4	-	Railless Electric Traction	??	Milnes Voss	B28R

Nos. 1-4 rebodied by Lockwood and Clarkson 1915-17, reseated to 27 in 1920. Nos 2 and 3 had fleet numbers transposed sometime during this period. Nos. 1 and 3 received new chassis in 1923, with new bodies probably by Short Brothers in 1924 (it has also been suggested that either 1 or 3 was rebodied by Roe at the same time as No. 6). Nos. 2 and 4 were similarly rebuilt in 1924.

The original chassis were built by David Brown of Huddersfield and the replacement chassis (probably) by Thornycroft.

**1913 (continued)**

In 1921 registration for trolleybuses became compulsory and registration numbers TB 8570-72 were issued to three of the four vehicles. Which vehicles received which registrations is unclear (probably one was out of service at this time) although TB8572 has been quoted as the registration of No. 4.

Withdrawn **unknown** (1-4).

**1915**

5	TB8573	Railless Electric Traction	??	Lockwood & Clarkson	B26R
6	TD417	Railless Electric Traction	??	Lockwood & Clarkson	B26R

Nos. 5-6 ran unregistered until 1921 when registration became compulsory; No. 6 out of service in 1921 but re-instated in 1925 with 1924 Roe body and Railless M-type chassis (probably built by Thornycroft).

Withdrawn **1927** (5), **1928** (6).



Ramsbottom No. 2 at Edenfield terminus. It was a 1913 Railless trolleybus with Milnes Voss 28-seat bodywork. (LTHL collection).





No. 7 was a 1922 Railless M-type built by Thornycroft with Short Bros B26R bodywork. (LTHL collection).

## Bus Fleet List 1922-1969

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Reg. No; Chassis; Chassis No; Body; Seating.

### 1922

<b>8</b>	<b>TC780</b>	<b>Thornycroft J</b>	<b>9671</b>	<b>Dodson</b>	<b>B26R</b>
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Withdrawn 1927 (8).

### 1923

<b>9</b>	<b>TC4907</b>	<b>Thornycroft J</b>	<b>9271</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B26D</b>
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Withdrawn 1924 (9).

### 1924

<b>10</b>	<b>TC5979</b>	<b>Thornycroft J</b>	<b>10478</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B26F</b>
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<b>11</b>	<b>TC7569</b>	<b>Thornycroft BT</b>	<b>10252</b>	<b>Dodson?</b>	<b>B20F</b>
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Withdrawn 1924 (10), 1933 (11).



A Ramsbottom Thornycroft J at the Duckworth Arms, Shuttleworth. The photo is dated 1923, if this is correct then this vehicle must be either No. 8 or No. 9 - its exact identity is uncertain. (LTHL collection).



## 1926

9*	??	Thornycroft A1	12455	??	B20F
10*	TD4886	Thornycroft A1	12456	Hall Lewis	B20F
12*	??	Thornycroft A1	12749	??	B20F
13-14	TD7539-40	Thornycroft A1	12875/77	Roe	B20F

\*Probable fleet numbers based on previous and subsequent numbering.  
 Withdrawn **unknown** (9, 12), **1929** (13-14), **1931** (10).

## 1927

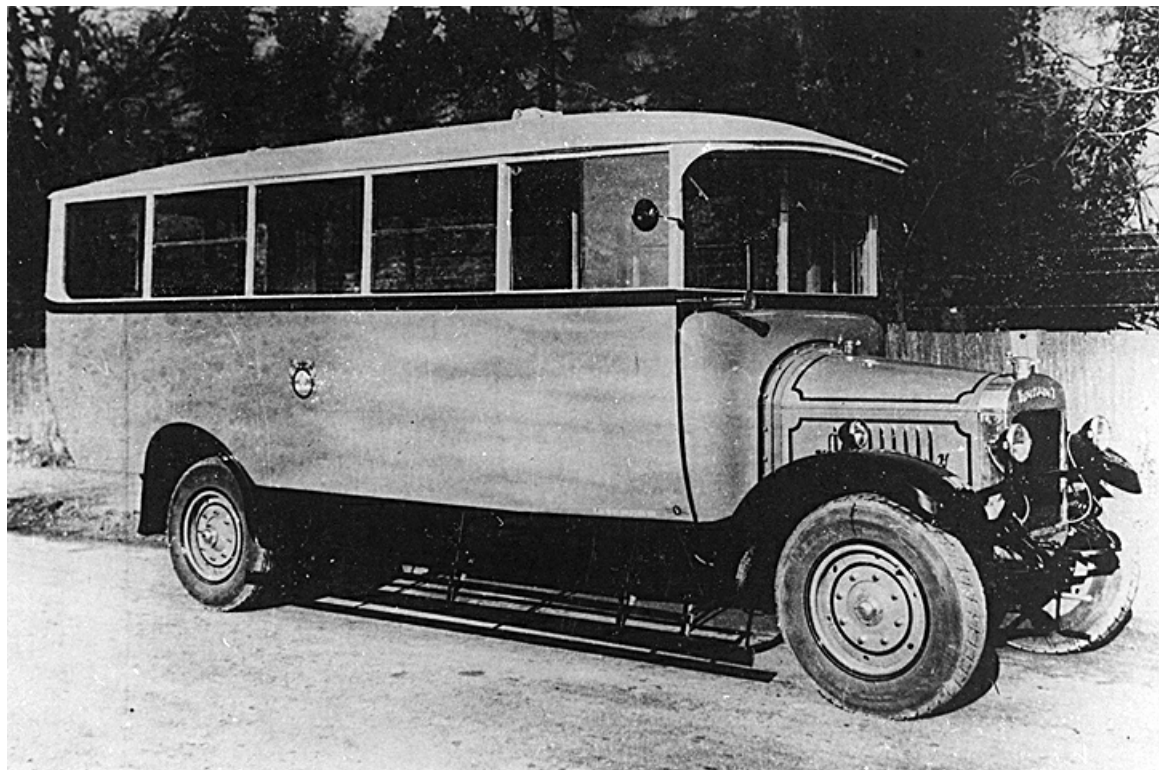
15-16	TD8738-39	Leyland PLSC1	45698/99	Leyland	B31R
17	TE1986	Leyland PLSC3	45610	Leyland	B35R

Nos 15-17 re-numbered in 1932 to 9, 8, 7 respectively.  
 Withdrawn **1937** (15-16[9, 8]), **1938** (17[7]).

## 1928

18	TE4508	Leyland PLSC3	47116	Leyland	B35R
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No. 18 re-numbered 6 in 1932.  
 Withdrawn **1938** (18[6]).



Ramsbottom No. 13 (TD7539) was a 1926 Thornycroft A1 with Roe B20R bodywork. (LTHL collection).

**1929**

<b>19</b>	<b>TE6075</b>	<b>Leyland PLSC3</b>	<b>47629</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B35R</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>TE9253</b>	<b>Leyland LT1</b>	<b>50164</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B32R</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>TE9252</b>	<b>Leyland LT1</b>	<b>50605</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>B30R</b>

Nos. 19-21 re-numbered 5, 4, 3 respectively in 1932.  
Withdrawn **1946** (19[5], 20[4], 21[3]).

**1930**

<b>22</b>	<b>TF3027</b>	<b>Leyland LT2</b>	<b>51226</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B32R</b>
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No. 22 re-numbered 2 in 1932.  
Withdrawn **1946** (22[2]).

**1932**

<b>23</b>	<b>TF7112</b>	<b>Leyland LT5</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>B36R</b>
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No. 23 re-numbered 1 in 1932.  
Withdrawn **1946** (23[1]).

**1933**

<b>12</b>	<b>TJ2639</b>	<b>Leyland LT5</b>	<b>3245</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B36R</b>
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Withdrawn **1950** (12).



No. 19 (TE6075) was a 1929 Leyland PLSC3 Lion with Roe 35-seat bodywork, pictured here at Ramsbottom depot when new. (LTHL collection).



No. 23 (TF7112) was a 1932 Leyland LT5 with Leyland B36R bodywork. It was re-numbered 1 later the same year and withdrawn in 1946. (LTHL collection).

**1934**

**10-11 TJ7025-26 Leyland LT5A                    3966/67            Roe                    B36R**

Withdrawn **by 1951** (10, 11).

**1935**

**13-14 ATD136-37 Leyland LT7                    7652-53            Roe                    B36R**

Withdrawn **1950** (13-14).

**1937**

**8-9    CTB138-39 Leyland TS7                    13626-27            Roe                    B36R**

**15    CTD149        Leyland TS8                    14751                Roe                    B36R**

Withdrawn **1952** (9), **1958** (8, 15).

**1939**

**6-7    ETD52-53    Leyland TS8                    303374-75            Roe                    B36R**

Withdrawn **1960** (6-7).



Seen outside the depot is No. 11 (TJ7026) a 1934 Leyland LT5A with Roe B36R bodywork. (LTHL collection).



No. 15 (CTD149) was a 1937 Leyland Tiger TS8 with Roe 36-seat bodywork. It spent 21 years in the fleet before being withdrawn in 1958. (LTHL collection).





No. 6 (ETD52) was one of two Leyland TS8 'Tigers' with Roe B36R bodywork purchased in 1939. (LTHL collection).

**1946**

<b>16</b>	<b>GTC975</b>	<b>Leyland PS1</b>	<b>460560</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B35R</b>
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Withdrawn **1961** (16).

**1947**

<b>17-18</b>	<b>HTB656-57</b>	<b>Leyland PS1</b>	<b>462440/683</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B35R</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>HTB658</b>	<b>Leyland PS1</b>	<b>462769</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B35R</b>
<b>20-22</b>	<b>HTF815-17</b>	<b>Leyland PD2/1</b>	<b>472362/579/77</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>H30/26R</b>
<b>23-24</b>	<b>HTF818-19</b>	<b>Leyland PD2/1</b>	<b>472638/581</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>H30/26R</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>HTF820</b>	<b>Leyland PD2/1</b>	<b>480795</b>	<b>Leyland</b>	<b>H30/26R</b>

Withdrawn **1961** (18), **1962** (19), **1965** (20), **1967** (22-24), **1968** (17, 25), **1969** (21).

**1950**

<b>26-27</b>	<b>MTC255-56</b>	<b>Leyland PSU1/13</b>	<b>501199-200</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B44F</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>MTC257</b>	<b>Leyland PSU1/13</b>	<b>501536</b>	<b>Roe</b>	<b>B44F</b>

Withdrawn **1962** (26, 27), **1963** (28).



No. 16 (GTC975), a 1946 Leyland PS1 with Roe 36-seat bodywork waits outside Bury Art Gallery ready to depart on the Bury to Ramsbottom service. (John Kaye).



Ramsbottom's first double-deckers were six all-Leyland PD2/1's new in 1947. This is No. 25 (HTF820), which was withdrawn in 1965. (LTHL collection).

**1951**

**29 MTC998 Leyland PD2/1 505923 Leyland H30/26R**

Withdrawn **1969** (29).

**1952**

**30 MTC999 Leyland PSU1/13 520269 Leyland B44F**

Withdrawn **1966** (30).

**1961**

**1 247STD Leyland PD2/24 591692 East Lancs H35/28R**

No. 1 to SELNEC PTE 11/69 (re-numbered 6401).

**1962**

**2 367XTE Leyland PD2/30 613435 East Lancs H35/28R**

No. 2 to SELNEC PTE 11/69 (re-numbered 6402).

**1963**

**3 9459TE Leyland PD2A/30 623492 East Lancs H35/28F**

No. 3 to SELNEC PTE 11/69 (re-numbered 6403).



1963 Leyland PD2A/3 No. 3 (9459TE) with East Lancs 63-seat bodywork. This bus passed to SELNEC in 1969 where it became No. 6403. (LTHL collection).

**1965**

<b>4</b>	<b>LTD232C</b>	<b>Leyland PD3A/1</b>	<b>L24676</b>	<b>East Lancs</b>	<b>H41/32F</b>
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No. 4 to SELNEC PTE 11/69 (re-numbered 6404).

**1966**

<b>5</b>	<b>TTB879D</b>	<b>Leyland PD3A/1</b>	<b>L44505</b>	<b>East Lancs</b>	<b>H41/32F</b>
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No. 5 to SELNEC PTE 11/69 (re-numbered 6405).

**1967**

<b>6-7</b>	<b>DTC415-16E</b>	<b>Leyland PD3/4</b>	<b>701219/20</b>	<b>East Lancs</b>	<b>H41/32F</b>
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<b>8-9</b>	<b>FTF702-03F</b>	<b>Leyland PD3/4</b>	<b>702350/51</b>	<b>East Lancs</b>	<b>H41/32F</b>
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<b>12</b>	<b>RJX258</b>	<b>Albion NS3AN</b>	<b>82068B</b>	<b>Weymann</b>	<b>B31F</b>
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No. 12 ex-Warrington Corporation (No. 95; new 1963 to Halifax JOC, No. 258); Nos. 6-9, 12 to SELNEC PTE 11/69 (re-numbered 6406-6409, 6082 respectively).

**1969**

<b>10</b>	<b>OTJ334G</b>	<b>Leyland PD3/4</b>	<b>804987</b>	<b>East Lancs</b>	<b>H41/32F</b>
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<b>11</b>	<b>TTD386H</b>	<b>Leyland PD3/4</b>	<b>902844</b>	<b>East Lancs</b>	<b>H41/32F</b>
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No. 10 to SELNEC PTE 11/69 (re-numbered 6410); No. 11 delivered directly to SELNEC PTE 11/69 in Ramsbottom livery; re-numbered 6411.



No. 6 (DTC415E) was a 1967 Leyland PD2/13 with East Lancs H41/32F bodywork. It became SELNEC No. 6406 in November 1969. (LTHL collection).



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*In producing this booklet reference has been made to the following source: Bury Corporation Transport 1903 - 1969 by Thomas Fish; British Trolleybus Systems No. 21 , Newman, Buses No. 293, August 1979; Hyndburn & Rossendale - 75 Years of Municipal Operation, Deegan, Omnibus Society, 1982; PSV Circle Fleet History PC24, 1998.*

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