The Ransomes and Rapier War Memorial

This document was researched and written Spring 2010 (with updates December 2012 and September 2013) by: Jean Austin

Additional information on the events connected with some of those killed in WW1 has been provided by **Graham Jones**. **Steve Girling** provided photographs of the memorials in their original setting at Waterside Works.

If you can add any additional information, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Ipswich – Ransomes and Rapier War Memorial Now in Bourne Park, Ipswich

Prior to being located in Bourne Park, the memorials were on the wall outside the canteen area (overlooking the bowling green) of the Waterside Works. The memorial to employees killed in the First World War was unveiled on 8 January 1921 and was initially in the 'billiard room'. The company – which had extensive premises off the Wherstead Road, including in 'Rapier Street' – was closed down in 1987 (and the site is now largely redeveloped). The three sided memorial was erected in Bourne Park in 1988 – one side commemorates the employees who died in the First World War; a second side: those who (including civilian employees) were killed or missing in the Second World War; and the third side commemorates Richard Stokes, who was long associated with the company as Chairman and Managing Director.



Side One:

Those who died in the Great War, 1914-1919:

Lt Francis Stoney, Royal Engineers Sgt George Beaumont, 2nd Essex Trooper Roderick Livesey, Loyal Sfk Hussars Pte C Bradbrook, 4th Suffolks Pte Sydney Knights, RAMC Sgt John Edward Podd, 4th Suffolks Driver John B Hill, RFA Pte Arthur Burrows, 2nd Suffolks Pte Nathaniel Kirby, 4th Suffolks Pte C W Setterfield, 1st Suffolks OMS Harold E Hughes, 9th Middlesex Regt Cpl William Hardwicke, RAMC Pte Benjamin C Baker, 7th Suffolks Pte Lancelot J Ellis, Machine Gun Corp 2nd Lt Herbert Keell, 3rd Sussex Regiment L/Cpl Ernest Pearce, 1st Suffolks Pte Stanley H Pryke, 1/3 Loyal Suffolk Hussars Pte Alfred Moore, 2/4th Suffolks Pte W Teager, 2nd Suffolks

1914-1918

Stoney, Francis George Duncan

Lt, 204th Company, Royal Engineers: Died of wounds 25 August 1916, age 23. Buried at Dive Copse Cemetery, Sailly-le-Sec, France. Son of Edward Duncan and Ellen Naomi Stoney of Eastbourne. Francis Stoney was the grandson of Mr Francis Stoney (born 1838 Ireland) who was the Works Manager at Rapiers from 1887-1897.

204th Corps, attached to 35th Division, part of 4th Army under General Rawlingson, took part in the Battle of the Somme which commenced on 1 July 1916. By 13 July the 4th Army advance had reached the second enemy defensive complex. A well planned night attack on 14 July took British troops through the line but then ran into stiffening resistance at Guillemont, Delville Wood and Longueval. Attack and counter attack ground on as the British line edged forward but heavy losses were sustained. It is possible that Lt Stoney was injured during this action and evacuated to a Field Medical Centre at Sailly le Sec where he died and was buried at the Dive Copse Cemetery.

Hughes, Harold E

Regimental Quartermaster Sgt, 9th Middlesex Regt; died 22 June 1919 age 26, buried in Basra War Cemetery

Beaumont, George

Sgt 8057, 2nd Essex Regt, born Ipswich, enlisted Bury St Edmunds, killed in action 28 March 1918, no known grave, commemorated on the Arras war memorial. Son of Mr and Mrs Walter Beaumont of 109 Felixstowe Road, Ipswich

Positioned near Gavrelle, just north of Arras, the Battalion was subjected to very heavy shelling on front, support and reserve lines, when the enemy commenced operation "Michael" on 21 March 1918, in an attempt to win the war before the arrival of US forces in overwhelming numbers. On 28 March the bombardment increased in strength and the enemy attacked the British front line in great numbers. All communications to Battalion HQ were lost and surviving troops retreated under severe pressure.

Hardwicke, William Alfred

Cpl 473267, RAMC, 88th Field Ambulance Group. William had belonged to the TA prior to joining the RAMC Died 2 October 1918 age 40. Son of Julia Hardwicke of Ranelagh Road, Ipswich, buried in Brandhoek New Military Cemetery No 3, near Ypres. It was Cpl Hardwicke's last day of duty before he was due to go on leave, there had been a heavy battle during the day and he volunteered to lead a stretcher party to collect the wounded. All the party were killed by a shell exploding nearby and were buried next to each other. This cemetery, which is one of three in this small village, is very well kept and I placed a poppy on his grave when I visited the area in 2001. William had been a storeman at Ransomes and Rapiers. He left a wife and five children; his son Harold Hardwicke (who was by then married) was killed during the 2nd World War in Hong Kong.

Livesey, Roderick

Trooper L/Sgt 41061, Loyal Sfk Hussars (8th Suffolks) born Forest Gate, Essex, formerly 2135 Suffolk Yeomanry, enlisted Ipswich. Killed in action 12 October 1917; no known grave, commemorated on the Tyne Cott memorial.

At 05.25am on 12 October 1917, a British attack was launched between the Ypres-Roulers railway and Houthulstforest. An hour later the 8th Battalion was moved forward in the wake of the 55th Brigade. A considerable enemy barrage and heavy machine gun fire was encountered. Shell holes were full of water and the men had to struggle to prevent themselves fromdrowning. Due to the very severe conditions, the advance was haulted. The Battalion suffered 232 casualties.

Baker, Benjamin C

Private 16038, 7th Suffolks, born Stoke, Ipswich, enlisted Ipswich, killed in action 3 July 1916 age 22, son of Mrs Sarah Baker of Bradley Street, Ipswich. No known grave, commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

On 2 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the 7th Battalion was moved up to the British front line trenches. On 3 July, as part of the 35th Brigade, along with the 5th Royal Berkshires, the 7th Suffolks Battalion took part in a two Brigade frontal attached on Ovillers,

zero hour was set for 03.15am. The first four waves reached the enemies' third line of defence where after meeting very stiff resistance, the attack stalled. Due to the darkness the succeeding waves lost touch and were unable to assist. Casualties numbered 470 including all company commanders killed. The remnants of the Battalion remained in the trenches until 8 July.

Bradbrook, C E

Private, 4th Suffolks, died of wounds 22 December 1914 age 20. Son of Mrs E J Bradbrook, 50 Rope Walk, Ipswich. Buried in Lillers Communal Cemetery

Ellis, Lancelot J

Private, Machine Gun Corp/11th Suffolks. Died of wounds 26 August 1917 age 36, husband of Mrs Nellie Ellis, 7 Robinson Street, Ipswich. Buried in Templefleux-le-Guerard Communal Cemetery Extension

Knights, Sydney John

Private 1926, RAMC, 88th (1st East Anglian Territorial Force) Field Ambulance, born St Helens, Lancs, enlisted Ipswich, died of wounds at Gallipoli 23 August 1915, buried in East Mudros Military Cemetery, Greece.

Keell, Herbert

2nd Lt 3rd Sussex Regiment, killed in action, no known grave, 9 October 1917 age 22. Son of Charles and Florence Keell of 31 Berners Street, Ipswich. Commemorated on the Tyne Cott Memorial.

From the data base "Soldiers died" 2/Lt Keell was listed as serving in the 3rd Essex, a service/ training battalion based in UK. After training recruits were drafted into active Essex battalions. To be buried at Tyne Cott, panel 98-99, it is possible that 2/Lt Kewell was serving with 1st Essex, part of 29th Division/5th Army (Gen Gough) taking part in the **Battle of Poelcappelle** (9 October 1917). The supporting attack to the north achieved a substantial advance. On the main front the German defences withstood the limited amount of artillery fire. The ground along the main ridges had been severely damaged by artillery fire and rapidly deteriorated in the rains; the battle was a defensive success for the German army, although costly to both sides.

Podd, John Edward

Sgt 106, C Company, 4th Suffolks. Enlisted Ipswich, killed in action 12 March 1915 age 30. Son of Henry and Mary Ann Podd, of Ipswich, Suffolk; husband of Kate Edith Elizabeth Podd, of 15, Cobbold St., Ipswich, Suffolk. Buried in Guards Cemetery, Windy Corner, Cuichy, near Bethune, France.

Taking part in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, before dawn on 12 March, the 4th Battallion was ordered to move forward from trenches at Windy Corner to the Rue de Berceaux. As it moved off, the column was subjected to a severe artillery barrage, inflicting many casualties.

Pearce (Pearse on CWGC site), Ernest

L/Cpl 6073, 1st Suffolks, born Plymouth, enlisted Bury St Edmunds, killed in action 3 October 1915 age 31 no known grave. Son of Jane Pearse, of "Etheldene", Wherstead Rd., Ipswich. Commemorated on the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.

Arriving at Noyelles-les-Vermelles in the Loos battle area on 27 September 1915, the main attack was over, and on the following day the Battalion marched to Sailly-Labourse where it was engaged in continuous fighting from 29 September until the 3 October, in the area of the infamous Hohenzollern Redoubt. At 2.00am on 3 October, B and C Companies attacked with A Company in reserve. Due to a very congested rambling network of support trenches, D Company did not arrive in time to start the attack. In total darkness and without artillery support, the three Companies groped their way to the objective which, due to lack of guiding markers, was missed. About 160 casualties were suffered.

Hill, John B

Driver 14379 RFA (129th Bttn, 42nd Brigade) born Ipswich, enlisted Ipswich, killed in action 10 September 1918. Buried in Vaulx Hill Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France

Pryke, Stanley H

Private 320209 1/3 Loyal Suffolk Hussars (15th Suffolks), born Ipswich, enlisted Ipswich, died 2 July 1918, age 20, buried in Ipswich Cemetery. Son of Herbert Edwin Pryke, of 37, Martin Rd., Ipswich, and the late Edna Pryke. Born at Ipswich. (His father, whose occupation in the 1911 census was 'engineers pattern maker' is believed to have also worked for Rapiers).

Following a successful campaign in Palestine under General Allenby, the Battalion returned to the Western Front as part of the GHQ reserve in June to July 1918, eventually being sent to the front line in front of St Venant, in the Haverskerque-Amusoires sector. Pte Pryke may have died of influenza while on leave in Ipswich.

Burrows, Arthur

Private 3/9376 2nd Suffolks, born Stoke, Ipswich, enlisted Ipswich, killed in action 17 June 1916. Brother of Mr. J. H. Burrows, of 15, Prospect Rd., Ipswich, Suffolk. No known grave. Commemorated on Gooree British and Indian Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France.

Following two weeks rest at ericourt, the Battalion moved up the line near Maltz Farm close to Trones Wood. On 16 August at 5.30am in co-operation with the French, an attack was launched following an artillery barrage. Heavy machine gun fire was encountered and at night the Battalion withdrew to its original lines.

Kirby, Nathaniel

(CWGC gives his name as 'Nelson')

Private 1675 4th Suffolks, born Stoke, Ipswich, enlisted Ipswich. Killed in action 21 December 1914, no known grave. Commemorated on the le Touret Memorial, France.

On 20 December 1914 the Battalion moved towards La Basee where B Company was ordered across the canal and into the line at Givenchy with the 1st Manchesters. Before noon, the enemy succeeded in capturing parts of Givenchy but by 5.00pm the village was regained. Throughout the night, the enemy made repeated attempts to retake the village but without success. This gallant defence was mentioned in despatches by Sir John French. On 21 December, having suffered only light losses, the 5th Suffolks were relieved by a Brigade of Guards and on 22 December returned to billets at Beuvry.

Moore, Alfred Charles

Private 201204 2/4th Suffolks, enlisted Ipswich. Killed in action 20 July 1916, no known grave. Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

Following an attack on Switch trench where over 200 casualties were sustained in support of 1st Middlesex on 15 July 1916, the 4th Battalion moved to Shell Valley. Early on 20 July, in support of the 19th Brigade, the Battalion attacked High Wood, incurring a further high number of casualties. On 21 July, the Battalion was relieved and returned to Mametz Wood where it was bombarded day and night with high explosive, shrapnel and tear gas shells.

Setterfield, C W

Private 17061 1st Suffolks Died of wounds 18 May 1915. Born at Islington, London, enlisted Ipswich. Husband of F. Setterfield, of 62, Parliament Rd, Ipswich. Buried in Ipswich cemetery. *In early May 1915, the 1st Battalion was on the Ypres Salient when the enemy unleashed a violent artillery hombardment of high explosive shells followed by poison gas.* For days the 1st

violent artillery bombardment of high explosive shells followed by poison gas. For days the 1st Battalion valiantly held its position until being finally over run. Casualties on 8 May amounted to over 400.

Teager, W

Private 6459 2nd Suffolks Born Ipswich, enlisted Ipswich, killed in action 26 August 1914, age 30, no known grave. Husband of Daisy Gertrude Webb (formerly Teager), of 2, St. Peters Place, Boars Head Lane, Stoke, Ipswich. Commemorated on the la Ferte-sous-journa Memorial, Seine-et-Marne, France.

April 1915 opened with the 2nd Battalion in the Vierstraat area. During the previous month, during the couse of ordinary trench routine, 140 casualties were sustained. On 11 April, the 2nd Battalion was withdrawn to billets in Wesroutre.

Those who died in the Second World War 1939-1945:

W McPherson, Royal Navy S Dines RASC W Ellonor, RAF R D Butler, KOYLL W Pagett, Royal Navy R W Jones, 22nd Dragoons B L Lay, RAF M C Cape, Queens Rifle Rgt

Missing: J M Read, RAF J Baker, RAF A G Taylor, RAF A E Hurlie Royal Navy G W Leftley, Royal Artillery K E W Wolton, 8th Rifles D Underwood RAF L Jacob Royal Navy R Spall, RAF J G Smith, The Buffs

J Mann, Merchant Navy

Civilian Employees:

Mrs Anthony E Quinton H L Judd O Mayes F Whiting C F Cripps P N Sharpe H Roberts W W Searley S Cornish

William McPherson

Royal Navy, Master at Arms; Died 14 June 1946 age 43 on HMS Liverpool. Son of William George and Beatrice McPherson; husband of Kathleen Florence Marie McPherson, of Ipswich, Suffolk. No known grave, commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial

Aubrey George G Taylor

RAF: AC2 with 97 Sqn. Died 28 December 1942, buried at Ipswich Old Cemetery

Stanley Samuel Dines

RASC: CWGC information – Trooper 2561135 Royal Armourer Corps (12th Lancers), died 23 April 1943, Son of Harry and Elizabeth Dines, husband of Laura Dines of Ipswich. No known grave, commemorated on Medjez-el-Bab memorial, Tunisia

A E Hurlie

Royal Navy - no further information currently available

William Ellenor

Sgt Nav/Bomber died 25 January 1944, Son of William and Lousina Ellenor; husband of Florence Ellenor, of Ipswich. Buried at Ipswich Old Cemetery

G W Leftley

Royal Artillery – no further information currently available

Raymond Dennis Butler

Private, Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infinatry died 10 May 1944 age 20 Son of Richard and Edith E. G. Butler, of Ipswich, Suffolk. Buried at Beach Head War Cemetery, Anzio, Italy

Kenneth Ernest William Wolton

Rifleman 8th Bn The London Rifle Brigade died 10 April 1945 age 19. Son of Ernest Frank and Evelyn May Wolton, of Ipswich, Suffolk. Buried in Hanover War Cemetery

W Pagett

Royal Navy – no further information currently available

Dennis Albert Henry Underwood

RAFVR; Sgt (Nav/Bomber) died 17 April 1943 age 20, Son of Albert and Dorothy Annie Barbara Underwood, of Bentley, Suffolk. Buried in Bone War Cemetery, Annaba, Algeria. He is also commemorated on the Bentley, Suffolk, war memorial. (More information: Sergeant (Navigator-Bomber) 1333767 Dennis Underwood, 142 Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Died 17th April 1943. Aged 20. Son of Albert and Dorothy Annie Barbara Underwood, of Bentley. Buried in Bone War Cemetery, Annaba, Algeria. Plot I. Row E. Grave 15)

R W Jones

22nd Dragoons - no further information currently available

Lionel Jacob

Royal Navy. **Believed to be** Lionel Claude Nathaniel Jacob, Engine Room Artificer 4th Class serving on HM Submarine Parthian, died 11 August 1943 age 28, Son of William and Ellen Sophia Jacob, of Stowmarket, Suffolk. No known grave, commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. "HMS Parthian (commanded by Lt. *Cyril Astell* Pardoe, RNR) was presumed mined in Adriatic late July / early August 1943. Having sailed from Malta on 22nd July for patrol west of Greece in the southern Adriatic. she was ordered to patrol off Otranto on 26th July 1943. She was again given a new area to patrol on the 28th. She was reported overdue at Beirut on 11th August 1943. Most likely she was mined off Brindisi. The date given as lost (11 August 1943) is the date she was reported missing."

B L Lay

RAF - no further information currently available

Ronald Edward Charles Spall

RAVR: Flt Sgt 297 Sqn. Died 3 March 1945 Son of Edward John and Alice Elizabeth Spall, of Ipswich, Suffolk. No known grave, commemorates on the Runnymede Memorial

M C Cape

Queens Rifles - no further information currently available

Joseph George Smith

'The Buffs' **Believed to be**: Joseph George Smith, Private, Queens Own Royal West Kent Regt. Died 10 November 1944 age 30. Buried in Forli War Cemetery, Italy, Son of George Ernest and Ellen Jane Smith, of Clerkenwell, London; husband of Violet Emily Smith, of Pentonville London. There is nothing known to connect him to 'Ipswich' but possibly he worked at Rapiers London office.

Jack Montague Read

RAFVR (given as 'missing' on the R&R War Memorial) Pilot Officer, 207 Sqn died 21 January 1944 age 22. Son of Cecil James Read and Elsie Read, of Ipswich, Suffolk. Buried in Berlin 1939-1945 war cemetery

John David Baker

RAFVR: Sgt Air Gunner, 630 Sqn died 17 March 1945 age 19. Son of Thomas Charles and Dora Baker, of Ipswich, Suffolk. Buried in Durnbach War Cemetery, near Bayern, Germany

J Mann

Merchant Navy – there are several "J Mann's" on the CWGC list and it has not been possible to identify this person

Civilian Employees:

Mrs Anthony

Jane Eliza Anthony, of 65 Avondale Road, Ipswich, wife of Walter Anthony. Died 26 August 1941 age 60

Cyril Francis Cripps

Died 28 October 1940 age 44 at Waterside Works, Ipswich. Husband of Florence May Cripps, of 44 Crofton Road.

Ernest George Arthur Quinton

Died 28 October 1940 at Waterside Works, Ipswich. Son of Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Quinton, of 48 Roseberry Road; husband of Mrs. Quinton, of 51 Clifford Road.

Philip Norman Sharp

Died 2 June 1942, A.M.I.Mech. E., Air Raid Warden. Son of Mr. and Mrs. George Meyrick Sharp, of 522 Felixstowe Road; husband of Miriam Sharp, of 79 Bixley Road. Died at 127 Bixley Road.

Henry Lee Judd

Died 28 October 1940 at Riverside Works, Ipswich. Home address 71 Clapgate Lane. Husband of Phyllis Joan Judd.

Herbert Charles Arthur Roberts

Died 28 October 1940 age 24 at Waterside Works, Ipswich. Home address 30 Finchley Road. Son of Ernest George and Florence May Roberts, of 108 Thackeray Road, Whitton; husband of Ivy May Roberts.

Oliver Mayes

Died 4 March 1945 age 52. Son of the late James and Sarah Jane Mayes, of Rattlesden; husband of Blanche Amelia Mayes, of 26 Seymour Road. Injured at 26 Seymour Road; died same day at East Suffolk Hospital.

Walter Searley

Died 4 March 1945 age 22 of 29 Seymour Road. Died at 29 Seymour Road.

Frank Whiting

Died 28 October 1940 age 21 at Waterside Works, Ipswich. A.R.P. Ambulance Worker; of 4 Bradley Street. Son of Mr. and Mrs. F. Whiting, of 46 Westward Ho! Leiston. Died at Waterside Works, Rapier Street.

Samuel William Cornish

Died 28 October 1940 age 58 at Waterside Works, Ipswich. Son of Elizabeth Cornish, of 10 Waterworks Street, and of the late Alfred Cornish; husband of Beatrice Emma Cornish, of 208 Cemetery Road.

3rd Panel:

Richard Stokes; Chairman and Managing Director Ransomes and Rapier Limited 1927-1957. Member of Parliament for Ipswich 1938-1957. His Majesty's Minister of Works 1950. Privy Councillor 1950-1955. Lord Privy Seal and Minister of Materials, 1951.

The cast plaque to Richard Stokes above the information plaque is missing from the memorial in its Bourne Park setting, but Rapiers employee Steve Girling has provided a photograph of this.



The unveiling of the First World War Memorial Saturday morning 8 January 1921:



• The scene at Waterside Works on 8 January 1921 at the unveiling of the memorial to the fallen in World War I.

The unveiling of the memorial was reported in the East Anglian Daily Times of Monday 10 January 1921 under the heading of 'Waterside Works – Memorial to the Fallen Unveiled'. The memorial was of bronze in a stone setting and located on the wall of the billiards room, overlooking the bowling green. There was a Guard of Honour from the 4th Suffolks, under Lt K W Brown and on its flank were a large number of employees who had served in the war and returned, on the opposite side was a 'pathetic group of those near and dear to the fallen' and facing the memorial were staff and workmen. As the Guard of Honour came to salute, Cpl B A Goode, who had been chosen as the man with the longest army service and who had been badly wounded in the war, pulled the cord which released the Union Jack covering the memorial. Buglars sounded the 'Last Post' and 'Reveille' after which wreaths were laid at the foot of the memorial from the Directors, Col and Mrs Ionides, the staff, the workmen and the relatives, 27 in all.

In Remembrance. 1914=1918.



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Lieut. Francis D. Stoney **Royal Engineers**



Pte. Sidney Knights. R.A.M.C.



Lc.-Corpl. Ernest Pearse 1st Battn. Suffolk.



Corpl. Wm. A. Hardwicke. R.A.M.C.

Pte. Stanley H. Pryke L. Suffolk Hussars

Dvr. John B. Hill. R.F.A.



Q.M.S. Harold E. Hughes. 9th Battn. Middlesex.



Pte. Nat. Kirby. 4th Battn. Suffolk



Sergt. George Beaumont, 2nd Battn. Essex.



Pte. W. Teacher. 2nd Battn. Suffolk.





Pte. C. W. Setterfield 1st Battn. Suffolk.



Pte. Launcelot J. Elliss. Mach. Gun Corps.



Pte. C. Bradbrook. 4th Battn. Suffolk.

*Pte. Alfred Moore. 4th Battn. Suffolk.





Sergt. John E. Podd 4th Battn. Suffolk.





11

On the evening of 27/28 October 1940 six on the night shift employees working in the machinery shop of Ransomes and Rapier were killed when a German booby trap 'butterfly' bomb fell on the works; the Germans are known to have had a detailed map of Ipswich and to have identified targets for bombing – below is part of a German war time map showing the docks area of Ipswich (this map came up in an auction in 2011). The areas outlined in red (the railway marshalling yards at Stoke and the promenade area of the docks) were, according to information with the map, areas not to be bombed as they were of future strategic importance in the event of a German invasion.

- 31 Waterside Works of Ransome and Rapier
- 43 also part of Waterside Works
- 24 Eagle Works
- 1 Ransomes, Sims and Jefferies 'Orwell Works'
- 6 Cobbolds Cliff Brewery



On 2 June 1942, just before 2pm, a number of bombs fall on Felixstowe Road, Bixley Road and Bixley Heath; as well as Air Warden **Phillip Sharpe**, four other people were killed. Incendiary bombs were also dropped in this raid and landed in many areas of Ipswich, including at the E R & F Turners works in Foxhall Road.

The last raid on Ipswich – and one of the last of World War Two – was at about 2am on 2 March 1945 when six houses in Seymour Road were destroyed and nine people killed, including R&R employees **Oliver Mayes** and **Walter Searley**.





The works canteen, overlooking the (very overgrown!) bowling green – the three memorial plaques are shown in their position at the time of the closure of the Waterside Works.



The memorial to Richard Stokes, in its original position on the canteen wall.

On page 11, Cpl William Hardwicke is shown in his 'working clothes' – his family have given me a photo of him in his uniform and are very happy for it to be used in this document:

