

***PLEASE.....***

***HAVE YOU SEEN***

***OLLIE ?***



I am neither a literary genius nor a professional writer so you, my dear reader, will have to judge the technical merit or otherwise of the following story and decide whether it is at all relevant to the nightmare we experienced .....an ordeal which I fervently hope no responsible or caring dog owner will ever have to experience.....

For many years we have taken in rescue dogs, those who have suffered extreme cruelty or trauma whether mental or physical and cannot adapt easily to an average family home.....

Our present dogs are Badger, a stray brought from Wales with a long history of abuse and neglect but who became my wonderful and loving Pets As Therapy visiting dog ....at 13 yrs old he is now retired having given 110% to his patients and touched the lives in a wonderful way of all those who have come into contact with him.....

He was joined by Ollie, a lurcher brought over from Ireland.....

Found at only 6 months old this young male was mange ridden, emaciated, his front legs bound together to stop him running away or defending himself and he had been severely beaten.....

Little is known of his background but he seems to have had little or no kind handling (if indeed any at all) prior to this callous and brutal treatment.....needless to say he was terrified of any contact with people and spent the first few weeks cowering in his cage, only daring to venture out if we were absent and always with Badger as his protection.....deeply traumatised it was going to take a lot of work and many months to build up his confidence and trust.....

After 18 months we made headway with him and he became a dog who, as long as he wasn't restrained in any way, began to enjoy physical contact through stroking, gentle brushing and even limited play.....his confidence grew daily, he ate like a horse and became happy and playful within his perception of a "safe" environment.....the outside world was a scary place to be viewed from the confines of his "lair" and should any loud noise or visitor intrude it would send him scurrying to its safety.....

This is the backdrop to what became an 8 day nightmare ordeal for both us and him.....

.....  
An ordinary morning....the master of the house had gone to work, dogs had breakfasted and checked the garden was as they had left it the previous evening, outside animals were fed, watered and in their runs.....

Leaving my boys with a strict instruction to behave themselves for a minute only while I took some laundry upstairs I returned to just one dog waiting for me in the kitchen ....finding Ollie had not followed panic set in and with heart in mouth I checked doors, rooms, the shed and finally the garden gates .....all were locked, bolted and no sign that anything was amiss but Ollie was nowhere to be seen.

Armed with biscuits and leaving Badger safely shut in I started searching on the road at the front .....with a feeling of dread I glimpsed Ollie running up and down the pub car park across a busy road obviously terrified in, to him, a totally unknown, alien and frightening world.

Within minutes he had disappeared from sight unresponsive to the sound of my voice or the lure of food and running in blind panic to escape strange sounds and smells.....

Chastising myself strongly for allowing hysteria to set in I started on the task of calling all local Dog Wardens, Police, Vets and anyone I knew in the area who would be out walking or maybe had the time to help in my search and called my husband from work....for the rest of the day we carried on searching and calling inbetween frantic phone calls, leaving gates and doors open at home in the hope that instinct (if he was nearby) would send him back to the only place he knew where there was safety and food.....there was one glimpse of him that day about 4 hours later when he was seen on our front path bewildered and panicky .unfortunately just someone coming down the road sent him running in panic ..... 2 hours after this our worst fears looked as if they were to be realised when the Dog Warden called to say that there had been a near miss with a car on the main road and Ollie was seen heading on to the local common

Immediately we went out just hoping that maybe we could entice him into the car but it seemed he had gone to ground.....if he stayed on the common there was a chance that instinct might guide him back or we might be able to trap him in someone's shed or garden but dusk came and it became obvious that we were going to have to give up the search until daylight hours

That night seemed endless .....Badger and I rested downstairs with doors and garden gates wide open just hoping that when things were quieter and normal meal time had passed instinct or memory might kick in

At first light our search started again – accompanied by Badger we posted leaflets, talked to other dog walkers, workmen and so on.....the common was large and with good cover so maybe he had kept dry and was frightened enough by the previous days brush with traffic to stay away from the road.....at least people now had a picture of him and would spread the word .....

Day dragged into evening with no news, every screech of brakes played on our already frayed nerves, each phone call raised our hopes that someone had caught him, or brought comforting words from friends who were just as helpless as ourselves but who shared our worry and distress.....housework and other necessary jobs were completed, food was prepared but tasted like sawdust, warm and safe in a known environment we felt so helpless but could do nothing more to help our boy.....we were now waiting for him to reappear hopefully uninjured..... that night was a repeat of the first, one resting by the phone in case, just in case, the other trying to snatch a few hours of sleep printing more leaflets or just pottering to pass the hours until daylight

A phone call the next morning sent us flying to the common.....

Ollie had been seen approaching other dogs but keeping too great a distance for people to approach him .....at least he was reported to be uninjured and he had stayed in the same area, ....maybe other dogs would tempt him so a dear friend joined us with her two friendly bitches but to no avail.....he dropped out of sight yet again as the common became busier.....we knew that he was scared of traffic, the lights, the sound of children playing and calling.....to us normal every day life but to a young terrified animal whose only world for months had been our “safe” house and garden with regular food it would have been a cacophony of terrifying and alien sounds .....the lights of our civilisation after dark were an unknown firework display and he would be feeling the first pangs of hunger ..... with the temperature dropping all we could hope was that as a young and very fit dog he would find somewhere safe to curl up and rest .....as long as he was drinking from the local streams food wasn't an issue at this point.....traffic was.....

Over the following days our routine at home changed little...Badger still had to be cared for and he was now being affected by the absence of his companion and all the changes to his routine - .....he needed to be with one of us the whole time which wasn't a problem as we were both off work for at least the next 7 days, unable to concentrate on anything but the search for Ollie.....sightings were coming in sometimes placing him in the relative safety of common or woodland, others very worryingly near main roads and busy thoroughfares, yet more down by our local river and water meadows.....each brought its own dangers for him and each was taking him further away.....

I cannot describe the see-saw of our emotions..... a sighting would bring hope and we would go dashing out only to get to the location and find him out of reach yet again running in fear in an unknown direction..... then our hopes would plummet, frustration and despair would set in but this would not help Ollie so somehow we had to pick ourselves up and lay constructive plans for the next time he was seen.....we owed this much at least to him and to everyone out there who had joined us in our search .....one way or another we would go on looking and caring and we would bring him home.....

The days with no sightings were even worse ...no sighting meant no road accident but it could also mean he was lying in a ditch injured, or still up and running and moving even further away .....we knew he would stay as far away from people as possible, loud noises would terrify, traffic was a completely unknown hazard and would confuse and disorientate ....all this coupled with .hunger and cold would test the mettle of any animal but for Ollie it could only worsen his already traumatised mind..... we could guess at his suffering but could do nothing to relieve his misery.....

On the 5<sup>th</sup> day of his disappearance we had our only sighting after dusk.....a walker called to say that a large black and white dog had been disturbed by his footsteps and leapt like a startled deer out of swampy undergrowth taking off into the night at great speed.... it had to be Ollie and he was still uninjured .....with heart in mouth and knowing that searching in the dark was completely futile we still felt a compelling need to go out and call for him .....by now he would be a lot weaker and perhaps our bonds with him would come to the fore ..... it was not to be and we returned home utterly desolate.....if he was in this particular location then he was being moved on by his fears to unknown territory and busy dual carriageways .....please Ollie, just stay away from the roads until we can get to you.....

Nights were getting longer, sleep eluded us and we survived on snacks, coffee and phone calls .....the house was empty although Badger needed our comfort and presence but even he seemed he seemed to be at a loss, affected by our distress and all the strange comings and goings.....

The next 24 hours brought nothing apart from endless searching and heartache .....we tormented ourselves by nightmare visions of what he was going through, visions which we seemed powerless to shrug off.....that is until the next morning when they were reinforced by the events of that day ....

A lady called with news of a black and white greyhound type dog, very thin and terrified seen on her journey to work along a busy dual carriageway, notorious as an accident black spot...if he was in this area then he would have travelled many miles and must be in physically poor shape...the previous night had been much colder than of late and the need to find food was obviously affecting him quite possibly overriding his natural fear of traffic and forcing him into a tremendously dangerous situation.....this same kind lady asked us to tune into the local radio station to hear a report of a dog being chased by a police car towards town.....once in this sort of concrete jungle the chances of being hit by a vehicle were very high and he was obviously in a desperate state.....co-ordinating sightings from home to my husband in the car we followed albeit at an impossible distance off the dual carriageway and up a main road into the face of oncoming traffic in the middle of the rush hour.....the situation seemed surreal as he was turned off into side roads by the police and then sighted heading onto another parkland/golf course area having more or less gone in a big circle back towards the dual carriageway notorious for the volume and speed of its traffic.....surely he couldn't avoid being injured or collapsing by now....something had to happen and we just prayed it wouldn't be his death.....

Despite many sightings throughout that morning we lost him yet again by early afternoon and could do no more until someone called.....after such activity and getting so close that night was by far the worst we had known.....frustration, self-pity and heartache were now getting to us in a big way.....

In the depths of despair we very nearly broke but as life can have a habit of kicking you when you're down and you think things can get no worse it can also pick you up and transfer you to dizzy heights.....

With what seemed an obscenely loud ring to our jangled nerves the phone broke through the early morning silence.....it was the Dog Warden, out of breath but with good news ---a call had taken her out to an old Army camp area where there were big fenced compounds.....

Miraculously a very distressed Ollie had been spotted that morning by two lads on their way to school...with tremendous foresight they had herded him into one of these compounds and the firm operating from there had also acted with great presence of mind by shutting the gate rather than trying to catch him.....their very actions and the phone call to the correct source of help had literally saved Ollie's life.....

My husband must have broken all records to get there safely but such was Ollie's terror that for over an hour he fought off what to him were his human predators.....he had no way of knowing that safety lay at the end of the lead and having survived this far he used every last ounce of strength to resist capture.....It took 5 people including my very distressed husband and the dog Warden (a superb and experienced dog handler) to eventually back him into a corner and manhandle him into the safety of a van.....no mean feat but the alternatives were just too horrendous to even be considered.....

A total wreck by now and of no use to anyone, least of all Ollie, I had stayed at home to co-ordinate matters but that hour before anyone was able to update me on progress seemed more like 3 .... it's amazing how many cups of coffee one person can make in that space of time.....the call when it did finally come from a very out of breath and deliriously happy husband had me sitting on the floor crying with joy, relief and goodness knows what else,.... in a great deluge of self-pity all the pent up emotions of the past 8 days overwhelmed me.....

**“We're on the way home with Ollie.....”**

## **Sightings.....November 2004**

### **18<sup>th</sup> Nov**

1. 8 am – missing from home address  
12 am seen on path to house – disturbed and ran off
2. 1.45 pm – reported by Dog Warden as a near miss road traffic accident on Kinson Road towards Kingsleigh School , Kinson

### **19<sup>th</sup> Nov**

3. 8.10 am – alongside cemetery on Kinson Common (Kinson Road)
4. 9-9.30 am – approaching other dogs nervously by waterfall/playing field Kinson Common

### **20<sup>th</sup> Nov no sightings**

### **21<sup>st</sup> Nov**

5. 7-7.15 am on Wimborne Road, Kinson going towards Northbourne
6. 8-8.15 am sighted by owners on playing field, Broadway Ave, Kinson – came towards companion dog then circled and disappeared – appeared uninjured
7. 9-9.30 am Northbourne roundabout

### **22<sup>nd</sup> Nov**

8. 7-8.15 am several sightings put him in riverside area behind Cherry Tree nursery Northbourne

### **23<sup>rd</sup> Nov no sightings**

### **24<sup>th</sup> Nov**

9. 7 am on dual carriageway at Blackwater Junction
10. caught on camera in Asda car park by security guards, barking and possibly being taunted or chased
11. 8 am followed up Holdenhurst Road by police into face of oncoming rush hour traffic turned off into Curzon Road and reported by local worker heading towards Kings Park
12. 9.25 am several sightings by football stadium and in Kings Park recreation area – last seen going over bank to new houses in Bishops Close

### **25<sup>th</sup> Nov**

13. 8 am Dog Warden called following a call from a Christchurch firm in Barrack Road Christchurch... Ollie trapped in compound Bailey Road

**By 12am (midday) he was safely home exhausted but home in Kinson**



## FACT SHEET

**To the best of our knowledge the details contained in the following pages are accurate at the time of writing**

**November 2004**

**We hope it will of some help**

**Julie and Peter Lankshear**

### **A few pointers which I hope will help**

Keep going back to the place where you last saw him/her.....call using any of your normal commands, etc. **DO NOT** be tempted to wander around in a wide area calling as you go, it will just confuse the animal if it is somewhere near.....a high percentage of dogs make their way back to the same spot or to the car park, familiar shops, etc.

If you have been away from home on a walk try to contact a neighbour to watch out, or if there are 2 of you and you are close enough to home one would be advised to go back and open gates, etc staying at home in case they make a bolt for familiar surroundings.....this does of course depend on how far away from base you are at the time.....although it will be hard please try to keep panic out of your voice.....an animal who is frightened or unsure will have heightened senses and will pick up any anxiety over the air waves

If you drive load your car with pets DIRTY bedding (it will give a familiar scent) water container and normal food bowl, dried biscuits or similar, maybe favourite toys  
warm blanket, towels, extra leads.....if he/she is spotted you will want to get out there quickly and not waste time checking you have everything you need!!!!!!

Check all sheds, garages, neighbours gardens, etc sounds basic but it`s amazing how many people don`t do this in their initial panic

Get out as many photos of your pet as possible – keep some in your pocket, some in the car, etc

If you have a computer print up an A4 flier with your pets photo if possible.....give the breed, size, colour , a telephone no (if possible a mobile as well and a friends or another member of the family just in case you are out) date missing and from which area.....as awful as it sounds do not give your address .....there are people out there who will take the opportunity to commit crime but anyone who is genuinely concerned will be only too willing to telephone you.....keep the poster as simple as possible .....too much information will stop people reading it or sorting out the most important contact information they need such as your phone number.

If you don`t have a computer or word processor write it out as clearly as possible and go to your nearest local print shop.....we distributed over 400 leaflets, then we lost count but it paid off .....

Wherever you go hand out leaflets, put them up in local shops (most shops do it free of charge in cases like this), target dog walking areas as many lost pets are attracted by other dogs, post fliers on telegraph poles, lampposts,etc if friends will take a handful it will spread the information more quickly and over a wider area.....

The following addresses and contact numbers are the authorities and organizations which you need to contact immediately if your initial search fails to find your missing animal.....the quicker you can get as many people looking as possible the more chances you have of finding your pet quickly minimizing any harm which can come to him/her.....

this only applies to my own area (East Dorset) but the relative counterparts will be available from your own local council offices, or in your local telephone directory.....ring or fax through details as soon as possible followed up by a photograph .....

## **LOCAL POLICE**

### **Bournemouth Dog Warden**

Town Hall  
Bournemouth  
Dorset

**Tel: 01202 451296**

### **Poole Animal Welfare**

Newfields Business Park  
Stinsford Road  
Poole  
Dorset BH17 0NF

**Tel: 01202 261700**

### **East Dorset Dog Warden**

East Dorset District Council  
Council Offices  
Furzehill  
Wimborne  
Dorset BH21 4HN

covers large part of New Forest

**Tel: 01202 886201**

### **Dog Warden**

Christchurch Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Bridge Street  
Christchurch  
Dorset BH23 1AZ

**Tel: 01202 495000**

**Fax: 01202 482200**

**The following is a very good organization which didn't mind in the least that I was in hysterics when I called them and they really helped pull things back together.....they provide the following instant response and are on call as a 24 hour emergency care hotline .. they can't physically go out searching but they can relieve you of a lot of work regarding letters, posters, etc in a very short space of time**

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### **Pet Register**

#### **Missing Pets Bureau**

50A The Green  
Warlingham  
Surrey CR6 9NA

[www.missingpetsbureau.com](http://www.missingpetsbureau.com)

Fax: 08701 999011

**Tel: 0870 1999000**

you can register on line or speak directly to a very calm and sensible operator I registered on line through a friend as I am not on the internet but I immediately followed up with a direct phone call as I needed the reassurance that everything had gone through and any advice they could give me....I found the operators very calm and comforting and the same operator will reply every time if at possible.....they're really lovely there

- \* instant registration in the Pet Register reaching 10,000 contacts from their database
- \* free scanning service and registration of your pet's photo in colour which assists fast identification
- \* automatic notification of your missing pet will be sent to major charities the R.S.P.C.A., Battersea Dogs Home, Dogs Trust, etc

There is a fee (as of November 2004) of £49.50 to do the necessary correspondence but this is a one off payment and your details and those of your pet will stay on their database until you request it be removed. Initially until your payment reaches them the details will still be sent out over the internet for a period of approximately 3 days.....(please check directly with them for more accurate information).

Other services are available so do phone them as quickly as possible to get the maximum help

## Your Insurance Company

This is a must if your policy covers you for the cost of kennelling, veterinary fees, poster printing, reward to be offered, etc.

**All local kennels, rescue organisations, dog clubs, etc.....**they can't physically go out and help search as many of them are working on voluntary staff and very stretched as it is but they do know an awful lot of people who would be only too willing to help in many other ways while they are walking their own animals and again they can spread the word over as wide an area as possible - if you can give them a supply of posters to distribute I'm sure you'll find them very willing to help.....

## Local newspaper and Radio Station

In our area Radio Solent, 2 CR and Bournemouth Echo responded really well

Don't give up easily .....animals are pretty resilient and don't have the needs humans do.....they don't need that soft comfy bed or clean sheets which seem so important at home.....if they can find water and can find a dry bush to curl up under or a corner out of the wind it's surprising what they can survive and they can go a few days without food if they have to especially if they are "well covered" when you lose them.....they are an animal not human and do have instincts which will kick in when it's needed ...they also have a much stronger sense of survival and senses which are far superior to ours.....keep looking, renew your posters whenever you can.....people out there will be looking even if you don't realise it and local kennels,. Rescue organisations are only too glad to be able to unite an animal with it's rightful owner rather than taking up desperately needed kennel space....

## Good luck and don't give up

**Dog refuge pair keen to find pet**

A KINSON couple, who offer refuge to rescued dogs, are desperate to trace their missing lurcher.

Two-year-old Ollie went missing on November 17 and has since been spotted on Kinson Common by people walking their dogs.

His owners Julie and Pete Lankshear, say he was badly beaten, tied and left for dead at only six months old. They say it has taken them 18 months to be able to stroke, groom or play with him.

The Lankshears, who live in Brook Road in Kinson, say that Ollie - whom they rescued from Ireland 18 months ago - is too timid to be approached and is virtually a wild animal. Mrs Lankshear, said: "We are desperate to catch him as he is now in a totally alien environment and is absolutely terrified of everything except other dogs."

"We have been searching the area on a regular basis but he has gone to ground."



**MISSING: Ollie**

"If anyone out there has equipment or knowledge of what would virtually be the capture of a wild animal, we are begging them to come forward with any help, knowledge or advice as he will soon start to lose body weight and could die hidden, as a wild animal does before we are able to get to him."

Ollie, who resembles a greyhound, is black with a collar-like band of white around his neck, white legs and a white nose. He has no collar - the one in the picture was taken off him with the use of a sedative when it became too tight. Anyone with information are urged to contact the Lankshears on.....

***“We couldn't have asked for a more wonderful Xmas present.....”***

*Following our recent nightmare ordeal when Ollie, our 2 yr old greyhound/lurcher went missing from his Kinson home we write to express our sincere and heartfelt thanks to everyone for their help in searching for him (especially when we had to take a rest), for handing out leaflets, talking to all and sundry, telephoning with information whenever he was seen and never giving up hope that we would find him and bring him home safely. So many of you will remain unknown to us and we will be unable to say thank you personally but to everyone we are very aware of what you did and it is appreciated.*

*Ollie's picture and the article in the Bournemouth Evening Echo on 24<sup>th</sup> November entitled “Dog Refuge pair keen to find pet” brought an overwhelming response just when we were reaching our lowest ebb.....*

*The knowledge that there were others out there who cared and quietly got on with the job of helping in whatever way they could, knowing that people in many cases shared our distress as if it was their own....all this helped us to keep going through the long hours of searching and hoping day after day...*

*Ollie was finally caught by his “Dad” and the Christchurch Dog Warden, Sharon Tyler in the Barrack Road area on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November with the help of some great guys from Quintec....he is now safely home, exhausted, thin, traumatised and with badly cut feet but making a slow and steady recovery from his ordeal.....*

*To any owners out there who are experiencing such a nightmare situation with their own pet we would just say that if you love your animal never, ever stop looking, never give up the task of finding them.....our hearts go out to you.....*

*Julie and Peter Lankshear*



## Additional advice from another supporter

*Thanks for Ollie's Story - delighted to hear that everything turned out OK.*

*When Arfa went missing we did everything she mentioned but I know that the microchip firm with whom he was chipped before we had him now does a great many of those tasks for you in return for a one-off payment of about £15.00. You obviously need to have his microchip number to hand.*

*The local press was instrumental in finding him as we were advised by a friend who has considerable experience in tracing lost animals that you have to construct a 'human interest story'. Ollie's was ideal & in Arfa's case we stressed his Spanish origins, the tough time he'd had before GIN came to his rescue, the fact that he had only one eye etc. & how he had gradually been learning to love us. Our chum suggested that we buy a local paper & find out who the cub reporter was (check who's doing the court reporting!) & ask for him/her by name & they are usually happy to get their teeth into your story. Our chap was great (in spite of looking about 15 years old) & we got a suitable photo for him to print.*

*We also had advice on web sites/suitable phone nos. to call & all were helpful. Some cost a small amount for advertising but we took the attitude that the more people who were on the lookout the better.*

*The following may be of use:-*

[www.ukpetsearch.freeuk.com](http://www.ukpetsearch.freeuk.com)

[www.ukpetsearch.freeuk.com](http://www.ukpetsearch.freeuk.com)

[www.lostyourpet.net](http://www.lostyourpet.net)

[www.amissingpet.co.uk](http://www.amissingpet.co.uk)

[www.animals-in-distress.net/lost\\_pets.htm](http://www.animals-in-distress.net/lost_pets.htm)

*Yvonne Autie,  
Norfolk,*

*ARFA 29.8.05 awake but on his blood & TAE!*



*on "his" couch*



*ARFA 7.2.05 at home*

*Arfa, previously Pirata, was a galgo from Spain.*

*War torn Pirata was renamed Arfa on adoption because he has only one eye and half a tail !*

**AND FROM ANOTHER SUPPORTER** .....

I have read with interest the articles on missing pets on the website.

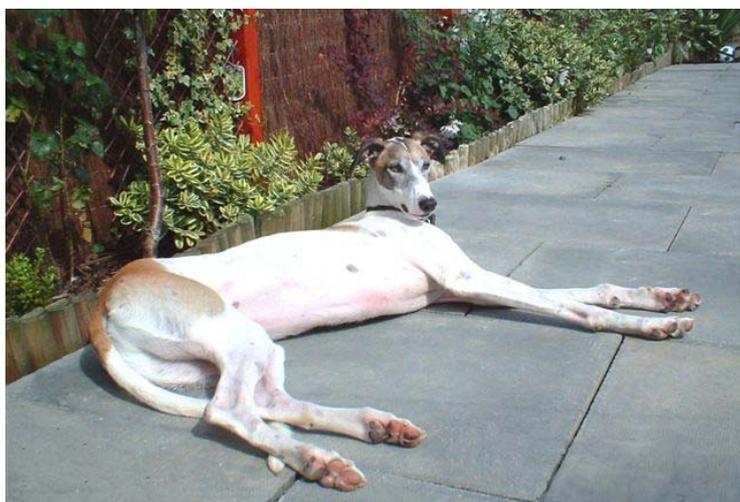
Luckily (touch wood!) we've never been in that position but we're well prepared should it happen.

When we insured Danny (was Dante) and our Lurcher, Colin with Direct Line we were given a years free membership with the Missing Pets Bureau. I think it's normally around £50 but I'm not sure. When we called to register, we were given the option to upgrade to lifetime membership of the PetBack MedAlert scheme which will ensure your missing pet gets veterinary attention in your absence. It also includes registration on their DNA database which is useful to prove ownership should your dog be stolen. There is an option to pay in instalments over 2 years, which we took, and it works out at just over £5 per dog per month. We thought it was worth it as our dogs are so precious. Our other dogs are on similar schemes too. I just thought that it might be worth advising owners to take advantage of this valuable service.

Their website is [www.missingpetsbureau.com](http://www.missingpetsbureau.com).

*Fiona Reekie  
Scotland,*

and mum to galgo Dante, now Danny, who recently completed quarantine and, as you see, is very happily settled now in his new home and family.....



Dante, now Danny, a galgo from Albacete

(see, right, how he looked in Spain when he was first rescued last winter)

