

# tenth anniversary issue

NEWS-SHEET No. 118

OCTOBER 1985

"To encourage the  
observation and study  
of birds in the  
Toowoomba area."



toowoomba bird club



## Annual Subscription

Ordinary / Family Membership	\$8.00
Student Membership	\$4.00

## Activities

Field Outings and Monthly Meeting - 4th Sunday of each month usually leave from Pigotts' car park at 7.30 am.

Camping trips, film and slide evenings.

## News-Sheet

Published monthly, before the outing. Articles have a deadline of the last day of the month, and should be mailed to the Editor.

## EDITORIAL

I am very proud to be a part of the Toowoomba Bird Club in this our tenth year. From a small beginning, we have grown to fifty-two members.

In the past ten years a lot of hard work has been done by both the Executive and members to make the Club the success it is, and I am sure that the next ten years will be even more successful.

The first impression I had of the Club was the friendliness of members and a willingness to help in identification of birds. The widening of my horizons and the making of new friends have made my short time in the Club memorable, and I hope it has been the same for all other members.

Angela Kilmartin

## NEW MEMBERS

We are very pleased to extend a warm welcome to our new members, and we hope to see them at our outings and film evenings:

Merv Baxter  
Kevin and Margaret McPhee  
Laurie Atzeni and Family  
Bradley Drennall

Bob and Flo Hamilton  
Nanette Rowland  
Hector and Sophie Todd

## OFFICE BEARERS IN THE PAST TEN YEARS

Many people have served our Club in our first ten years, and their names are listed below (in alpha order) with the offices they held.

MICHAEL ATZENI Records Officer October 1980 to October 1984  
LESLEY BEATON (BALL) Editor October 1981 to October 1984  
Librarian October 1984 to October 1985  
SUE ELMES Editor and Librarian March 1978 to November 1978  
DON GAYDON Records Officer October 1984 to October 1985  
ALAN GRAHAM Secretary-Treasurer October 1975 to October 1976  
JOHN GREGOR Editor October 1980 to October 1981  
ROD HOBSON Records Officer, Librarian and Editor October 1975 to October 1976  
RON HOPKINSON Editor-Librarian October 1976 to October 1978  
Editor-Records Officer October 1978 to October 1979  
President October 1980 to October 1982  
Acting Editor October 1980 to October 1981  
MARILYN JACOBS President October 1982 to October 1985  
BILL JOLLY President October 1975 to October 1980  
ANGELA KILMARTIN Editor October 1984 to October 1985  
ALISON McCULLUM Secretary-Treasurer March 1978 to October 1978  
MICK RUSSELL Secretary-Treasurer October 1978 to 1979  
ROBERT SHAW Secretary-Treasurer 1979  
ANN SHORE Secretary-Treasurer October 1979 to October 1985  
STEPHEN TEMPLE-WATTS Editor 1975

## TEN YEARS ON

One of the valuable functions of a club news-sheet is that it facilitates the sharing with friends of experiences enjoyed, travels undertaken, and understandings gained. Over the last few weeks I've journeyed through eight years of Queensland bird notes and checklists, I've leafed through old diaries, wandered through Bird Club News-sheets and in the process met once again many old friends and familiar places. It has been a rewarding journey that I would enjoy sharing.

### Early Days

Ten years on! Since Anne Shore reminded us recently that the club was about to celebrate its tenth anniversary, Eileen and I have spent a lot of time reminiscing about our early days in Toowoomba and about the club's beginnings. We had been involved with bird groups in the U.K. for several years before we came to Queensland, and one of our first actions on arriving in Toowoomba in 1973 was to join the Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club where we made a lot of friends who helped us to learn about the special environment we were in and about its flora and fauna. They were very exciting days, and as we began to record our sightings and increase our knowledge of birds in the region we became increasingly aware that this fascinating area, where the downs, the escarpment and the valleys came together, supported a rich and varied avifauna that had never been systematically documented.

By the middle of 1975, we found that as well as participating in regular Field Club outings we were spending a lot of time birding in the early mornings and at weekends with a growing group of keen and active naturalists who shared our particular interest in identifying and recording Toowoomba's birds. For the most part these were the people who came to our home at Swenson Street on 6 October 1975 and agreed to join resources and energies as the Toowoomba Bird Club.

As News-sheet Number One will bear witness, our agreed aims were to build up a good understanding of the bird population of the region, to encourage others to participate in the activity of watching and enjoying birds, to jointly grow in our collective understandings through a pooling of knowledge and experience, and above all to gather, record and publish some serious data on the ornithology of Toowoomba.

The name we settled on for the club was the result of a conscious decision to adopt as unpretentious a title as possible. Another early decision, taken soon after that first meeting, was to adopt as the club's emblem the beautiful bird that many of us felt to be the most dramatically distinctive of the region, the Black-shouldered Kite. It is pleasing to see the name "Toowoomba Bird Club" juxtaposed with a representation of that carefully chosen emblem and a short statement of philosophical aims, still providing the banner for the club's news-sheet.

## The Local Study Area and the Club Bird List

For many years I had maintained six-mile bird lists, based on a circle with a radius which stretched six miles from home; the distance was somewhat arbitrary, it began, I think, because that was about as far as I was usually inclined to walk. We had put together such a list over a couple of years in Toowoomba and the Club accepted this, suitably metricated into a 10 km format, as the basis of the local study area and the Club List. So we began in October 1975 with a base-line of 131 species, all recorded in the previous two years, and sixteen of us set out to build some detail onto that base and at the same time to extend it.

In 1977 the Club instituted a system of routine reporting of monthly sightings within the local study area, to be consolidated and published quarterly in the News-sheet. The advent of the RAOU Atlas scheme led us to redefine the local study area in terms of grid references, with effect from 1 January 1978, and we took the opportunity to increase the area to encompass the two adjacent 10 minute grid blocks located on either side of the line of 152 degrees longitude which runs through Redwood Park. At the same time the reporting scheme was adapted to combine records submitted by all club members into a regular return to the RAOU Atlas in the name of the Club. Most club members, myself included, opted not to make a separate contribution to the Atlas, but subsumed their records into the collective Toowoomba Bird Club return. Ron Hopkinson put in a great deal of diligent work to bring together the overlapping records of at least a dozen regular contributors, sometimes many more. This amounted to a very significant documentation of sightings in the region, and I have been able to identify several of the Club's more notable records in the now published Atlas. Alas, I have not been able to find an acknowledgement of the Toowoomba Bird Club in the recorded list of contributors.

By the time we left Toowoomba for Tasmania in 1980, the number of species identified in the local study area had grown to 204, and all of the original 131 species had been separately confirmed by club members.

## Particular Birds and Places

So many highlights come to mind; this is where the old diaries came into their own. One special event occurred before the club was underway but involved several friends who were later to become club members. In 1974 and 1975 Rod Hobson and I spent a lot of time exploring and recording in Redwood Park and over that period we met up with many exciting birds including Noisy Pittas, Brush Turkeys and a range of rain-forest pigeons. I remember Rod calling round early on a Sunday morning in April 1975 to ask me to look at a bird he had located roosting in Redwood. He didn't want to say what it was, not because he was uncertain - more I think because he didn't really believe his eyes! I had no idea what to expect as we made our way along the creek in Redwood Park that morning, but there on a limb which reached

over the clearing where the creek does a right turn at a giant fig tree to wander out of the park, was the mighty figure of a Powerful Owl! I don't recall just how many bird-watching friends were visited or telephoned that day, but I do remember that Marilyn Jacobs was among them and that she secured some excellent photographs which served to record the first of several visits we were to receive from that magnificent bird.

Even more surprising was another find of Rod's just under a year later. Cyclone David was battering the coast at the time, and what I think must be Toowoomba's most unlikely bird, a Sooty Tern, was found by Rod on the upsection of the Range Highway. The Chronicle of 24th January 1976 recorded the saga in some detail and the sorry corpse was displayed at a club meeting before being forwarded to the Queensland Museum.

Don Vernon, the Curator of Birds at the Queensland Museum, has been a good friend to the club and gave us a lot of encouragement in our early days, even bringing a prepared specimen of a Paradise Parrot to a club meeting - to encourage us in the search perhaps.

As the club became well-known in the community, people who had seen unusual birds or who had casualties which needed looking after or releasing in a suitable locality began to contact us. An extensive grapevine quickly developed to allow as many members as possible to share in these opportunities to observe birds which came to us in the hand, such as a Spine-tailed Swift which, to be accurate, arrived in a shoe-box in November 1976; the Little Bittern which was liberated from a canary's cage into the reeds at Ringmere in November 1977; a Red-crowned Fruit-pigeon, recovered from a laundry in Campbell Street in July 1978; and in August 1979 a rare close-up look at an Owlet Nightjar.

It was a great pleasure during our last three years in Toowoomba to welcome birding friends to our home below the range, where many exciting experiences were shared. Ringmere is full of such memories for us. During March and April 1979 several club members would visit us for a regular early evening appointment with a White-throated Nightjar who could be depended upon to cross the dam and then the house at twenty-past-six on the dot. The Easter of 1978 was one of the busiest times I recall at Ringmere, in terms both of birds and birdwatchers. Calls were sent out urgently when the first of the Black Kites that irrupted into our region in March of that year began to adorn the trees alongside the dam. Within a few days we were also to add Square-tailed Kites to the Toowoomba list. It was at Ringmere that we learned that when we thought we heard a flock of chickens in flight there were invariably Channel-billed Cuckoos around.

Reading a report on one of our Mudjimba campouts I found this quote: "Four days of living simply and enjoying your environment, the place you are at and the people you are with represents a rich experience. If one can see birds as well, that experience gains another valuable dimension." That fairly represents the balance to be found on the Bird Club Campouts as I recall them. Those recollections include Philip Elmes singing Bob Dylan songs around the camp fire, and looking like him too; the old Cornishman at the Mudjimba campsite who always wore the heaviest cable-knit sweater in the height of the Queensland summer; the tallest of tall tales from Reg Eley, last heard of living at Amby and writing a book on the wading birds of the world, presumably from memory; ready advice and example on good camping practice and bushcraft generally from Ron Hopkinson; and, of course, plenty of birds.

By the time we found that we had reached the point of moving on, the Bird Club had become a part of our daily lives. Mrs Lund at Helidon was proving to be an invaluable contact who would telephone whenever a new bird turned up at Hood's Dam, just behind her house. This was how we were alerted to our first Toowoomba Jabiru, as well as several other additions to the local list. When the Bishop of Geraldton came to Toowoomba in December 1979 to attend the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Toowoomba Diocese, such was his interest in taking a look at our birds that despite his heavy schedule of commitments he came down to Ringmere at 5.30 one morning to join me for an expedition into Redwood.

We have managed just three short visits to Toowoomba since 1980, but time prevented us from seeing many of the people we would have liked to meet again. I was sad not to see a single Black-shouldered Kite last time I was back - I hope it was only my timing that was wrong. We did however find an hour to take another look at Redwood, where as well as encountering so many familiar sights and sounds we had the unexpected bonus, at the very edge of the park, of finding Pacific Bazas at the nest.

During the five years we spent in Tasmania, Toowoomba, its birds and its people seemed a long way off and we missed them all. It was wonderful to hear from Anne that ten years after we thought there would be value in bringing together a group of like-minded people in pursuit of worthwhile objectives, the club is still actively pursuing those same objectives, and is doing so successfully. We are located in the A.C.T. now, and accordingly are much more within reach of old friends, any and all of whom would be more than welcome to call in and reminisce at first hand.

Bill Jolly  
Hall, ACT.

## THE FIRST TEN YEARS

"We are here - all sixteen of us, with the aim of doing some useful birding in the Toowoomba area and, hopefully, enjoying ourselves in the process."

That sentence formed the opening paragraph of the Toowoomba Bird Club's News-sheet Number 1, October 1975. The inaugural meeting took place on Monday October 6th of that year and temporary officers were elected. As the Club approaches the tenth anniversary of that first meeting and News-sheet, it seems appropriate to indulge in a little nostalgia and perhaps a little look at our current situation.

The "sixteen" referred to the foundation members, of whom we still have three - the current President, Marilyn Jacobs, Vera Simon and Rod Hobson. The others have been lost to the exigencies of employment taking them to other places, but not before several of them were able to contribute much of value to the Club.

That first News-sheet was a single sheet of green foolscap printed both sides by the Roneo process. Subsequent issues increased the number of pages and eventually changed to A4 format and offset printing on white paper. The green paper, familiar for several years, had to give way to a much reduced cost of white paper. Issue Number 4 (January 1976) introduced the Black-shouldered Kite as the Club emblem. The Kite has moved through several forms of logo but still flies at the masthead, and rightly so.

Issue Number 6 (March/April 1976) announced the adoption of a formal constitution. Issue 8 (June 1976) told of the first election of officers and also adopted the second logo form of the Black-shouldered Kite. This form continued in use until the current logo appeared in Issue 87 (March 1983).

In brief, then, the Club has in its ten-year life continued to publish and improve the monthly News-sheet. This is possibly the single most valuable club activity, to place on record contributions to general avian knowledge and provide a vehicle for members to share their birding experiences. Rising production costs have always been a problem but hopefully they will continue to be overcome.

The other, probably equally important, club project has been to maintain a reliable list of species for the Toowoomba area. Originally based on a list begun by Bill Jolly (the first President) in pre-club days, the number of species reliably recorded by at least two members has grown considerably. Incidentally, in the process the original 131 species were all confirmed. I can recall a conversation between Rod Hobson and myself, when the list stood at something like 150, in which we speculated as to whether we would find 200 species in our area. Not that mere numbers are important in themselves but it is important to record all the species occurring in the area. Of course the Club now lists about 240 species. Just for the record, number 200 was a Black Bittern, added to the list by Rod Hobson and this writer.

Currently, the most satisfying news for the Club must have been the recent headline in "The Chronicle" - "Go-ahead for Bird Habitat". The scheme involving an expenditure of \$350,000 will be the major project for the City in the bi-centenary celebrations and must bring an excitement to Toowoomba birders that could not have been foreseen ten years ago. Certainly the scheme is the brainchild of the Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club, but it was supported by our Club from the beginning, and I for one will be there on opening day along with members of the Toowoomba Bird Club.

In brief summation, I think it fair to state that although we have had our ups and downs in the decade past, it could be said - "We are here - all of us, doing some useful birding in the Toowoomba area and, hopefully, enjoying ourselves in the process."

Ron Hopkinson

### 1975 - 1985 : THE FIRST TEN YEARS

"A Toowoomba club just for birdwatchers? Great idea, Bill! Count me in. It's difficult to get to Brisbane for Q.O.S. outings, and Field Nats' outings don't cater just for birdos. Yes, I'll come to a meeting at your house. Vera might be interested too."

Oct. 6, 1975: Inaugural meeting at Bill and Eileen Jolly's house, 7 Swenson Street. 16 members, subs \$2.00. Officers: President, Bill Jolly; Secretary-Treasurer, Alan Graham; Editor, Steve Temple-Watts. Purpose of club: monthly meeting in members' homes to discuss bird sightings, monthly outings to birding spots, camps, compiling a comprehensive list of Toowoomba birds. We adopt a list of 131 species recorded by Bill Jolly from June 1973 to September 1975 within ten kilometres of the General Post Office as our first Toowoomba bird list. During the rest of 1975, seven new birds added to the list, Little Lorikeet being No.132.

1976: On January 25, Rod Hobson (Records Officer-Librarian) finds a dead Sooty tern on the Range Highway (possible casualty of a recent cyclone). Don Vernon, Curator of Birds at Qld. Museum, Brisbane confirms sighting. April: Club constitution is drafted. October: "A Toowoomba bird count on the same day as the Q.O.S. count? We won't be available as we participate each year with Q.O.S." Twenty-eight new birds added to the list in 1976. List contains 166 species.

1977: Gold checklists begin and club members start participating in the R.A.O.U. Atlas of Australian Birds. This means our study area will change next year. "Good! The bird count this year is not on the Q.O.S. count day, so Lesley, Vera, Sandy and I can help out." Twenty-one birds added this year to list. Current list stands at 187 species.

1978: Our local study area is enlarged to include two blocks, one up-range and the other down-range. We should now get more species. From March to August, numerous sightings of Black Kites. Mudjimba Beach campout was good fun! "Oh no! Not more name changes! Pacific BAZA!! I am not calling the Crested Hawk a Pacific Baza! White-throated WHAT? It will still be a Warbler to me! My White-eyed Ducks and Wood Ducks aren't changing their names. How do I explain to my students that Spur-winged Plovers are Masked Lapwings! Oh dear ... And my Spine-tailed Swifts will never become White-throated Needletails! I don't want to change names just because the R.A.O.U. says so!" Third Annual Bird Census - "Sector 6 again? Yes, that's fine ..." Twelve new birds added to list during 1978. List now 199.

1979: "What bird will be No.200 on our list? Peregrine Falcon? Black Swan? Brolga?" It was, in fact, a Black Bittern seen by Rod Hobson and Ron Hopkinson. Another good campout to Mudjimba Beach. Eight new birds added during 1979, making 207 species. Fourth Annual Bird Count in October - "We'll cover Sector 6 again." Ann Shore elected to position of Secretary-Treasurer at A.G.M. in October.



1980: Bill Jolly moves to Tasmania and Ron Hopkinson takes over as President of the Toowoomba Bird Club. At the A.G.M. members decide on a set day for outings - fourth Sunday of month - and an earlier departure time - 7.30 am. Michael Atzeni begins to make his mark on the club with identification of 5 of the 7 new species added during 1980. With two earlier additions, the list stands at 216 species (9 new birds during 1979-80). Fifth Annual Bird Count in October.

1981: This is the final year of the Atlas of Australian Birds. Records Officer, Michael Atzeni, publishes a Redwood Park birdlist in March, and helps to identify all the seven new birds seen in 1981. Our list is now 223! The Sixth Annual Bird Count is held in October and our first film, 'Osprey' is shown at the Education Centre in November. Lesley Beaton (Ball) fills the position of Editor which is great news as the club has been functioning without an Editor, with Ron Hopkinson acting in the position, for the entire year.

1982: After several years of preparation, I finally publish the first T.B.C. Index to the first 60 News-sheets. Thanks to Lesley for her help. "Michael's off on another 'twitching' trip? Lucky devil! Ann's gone overseas. Long-tailed Cuckoos in Toowoomba? Goomburra washed out again? Another film evening? Good outing to Ravensbourne National Park? A new Toowoomba bird NOT from Hood's Lagoon and NOT found by Michael Atzeni? Yes, Vera, Sandy, Lesley, Sr Patricia and I found a Painted Button Quail on the way home from Ravensbourne!" We add eleven new birds to our list in 1982, ten of which came from Hood's Lagoon, Helidon. Michael has a hand in all ten! Ron Hopkinson resigns as President and I take over in October. The Seventh Annual Bird Count in October with 22 participants and the most successful to date with 144 species recorded over two days. Our club now has a P.O. box at the Institute and a contest is under way for a new logo for the News-sheet. We support the Field Naturalists and Green Watch who have proposed a Waterbird Habitat in East Creek south of Alderley Street as a Bicentennial Project. What great slides from Ray Viljoen at the A.G.M.

1983: "How exciting! A Freckled Duck for the T.B.C. list! Found at Hood's? Naturally! Found by Michael and Pat? Naturally! What a great first bird for 1983!" We join the Q.O.S. for an Australia Day weekend campout to the Bunyas and I complete the second News-sheet Index (1981-82). Our first participation in February at the Toowoomba South Rotary Club's Annual Hobby-n-Craft Spectacular at the Showgrounds is a success. The Club adopts a new logo for the News-sheet designed by Roy Beaton. It first appears in the March edition. We enjoyed Len Harvey's slides in March and outings to Audrey Sorensen's property and Murphy's Creek among others. Michael, Pat, Terry and Brian take off to South Australia on another "twitching" excursion. Our first beginner outing in September is a success, attracting 26 people, 11 of whom are visitors. Michael proposes a change for the Eighth Annual Bird Count - dividing each 10 minute block into 4 sub-divisions (1-4 will be up-range and 5-8 down-range). Hopefully this will lead to a more accurate picture of species distribution in the Toowoomba-Helidon region. He also proposes that we carry out this new comprehensive survey four times a year, in each season - January, April, July and October, thus abolishing the need for our Annual Bird Count. These months will now be referred to as "S.S.S." months (seasonal species surveys). Five new birds added during 1983 bring our list to 240 species.

1984: The Club's S.S.S. months begin this year. We again participate in the Hobby-n-Craft show as well as in the World Environment Day in June. Joint outings with the Chinchilla Field Nats (February) and Toowoomba Field Nats (March) prove popular, as do Bob Dorricott's films in August. Peggy Beaton makes some terrific Carry Bags to be sold to aid Club finances. On a sad note, member Ron Colpus is killed in a road accident in June. His sons donate his bird books to the Club library. Another beginner outing is held in September. Only one new bird is seen in 1984, the Spotless Crake, bringing our list to 241 species. Michael and Lesley leave their executive positions and Don Gaydon and Angela Kilmartin take over the records and News-sheet respectively. The Bird Club takes over the organization of the Annual Q.O.S. bird count for Area 10 in October. It is very successful.

1985: "Our tenth year of existence! It doesn't seem possible!" More roving reports from Roy and Peggy Beaton. They sure do have an interesting life travelling here and there! Hobby-n-Craft Show again in February, last time in the old showgrounds. I meet regularly with the Waterbird Habitat Bi-centennial committee. New bird No. 242, Budgerigar, is seen on a Club outing in April. The third annual September outing for beginners is a terrific success. R.A.O.U. Congress held at the D.D.I.A.E. in September. Our TENTH ANNIVERSARY in October will include a social to Ravensbourne, and this special News-sheet.

P.S. Well, when I sat down to write a few 'brief memories', I had no idea that it would turn into such a production! We've come a long way in ten years - from 16 members to over 50 today - from 131 species to 242 on our present list. The records gathered over the years are, I feel, the most valuable contribution we make to local Toowoomba ornithology. I have enjoyed my ten years with the Toowoomba Bird Club - both the social contacts and the birding contacts. Good luck to all birdos for another ten successful years!

Marilyn Jacobs

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES - OCTOBER 1985

Glossy Black Cockatoo	18.5.85	Blackdown National Park (Near Dingo)	PM
Spotted Quail-thrush	"	"	PM
Burdekin Duck (21)	25.5.85	Kinkra Beach (near Yeppoon)	PM
Bush Hen	5.5.85	Yeppoon	PM
Barking Owl (pair)	26.5.85	Rockhampton	PM
Black-throated Finch (8)	26.5.85	"	PM
Topknot Pigeon (12)	16.9.85	City Golf Course T'mba	DG
Little Eagle	17.9.85	Boodua Reserve	DG, DC
Budgerigar (11)	17.9.85	Kingsthorpe	DG, DC
Fairy Prion (3, dead)	5.8.85	Hastings Point NSW	SP, MJ

DC Dean Collins      MJ Marilyn Jacobs      SP Sandy Pottinger  
 DG Don Gaydon      PM Pat McConnell

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - CHANGE OF VENUE

The date is WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 1985, and the time 7.15 for start at 7.30 pm sharp.

The place is Marilyn and Sandy's place - 'Brandy-wine', 21 Sylvan Court, Toowoomba.

There will be an illustrated address by guest speaker Don Seaton from the National Parks and Wildlife Service at Toowoomba - "Birds of Central and Coastal Queensland".

Members, please bring something for supper.

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QUEENSLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY BIRD COUNT - 12 & 13 October 1985

Give your name to a member of the Executive (see front cover) and take part in this Q.O.S. project which increases our knowledge of birds and their distribution.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY SOCIAL

Date: Sunday, October 27, 1985  
Place: Top picnic ground of Ravensbourne National Park  
Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park  
Time: 7.15 am for departure 7.30 am sharp  
OR at Ravensbourne any time during the morning  
N.B. 7.00 pm b.y.o. BBQ lunch

NOVEMBER Final Outing for 1985

Date: Sunday, November 24, 1985  
Place: Nancy & Ron Gooding's property, Killarney district  
Assembly Point: Albion Street traffic lights (first set of traffic lights on New England Highway) in WARWICK  
Time: 8.15 am  
Leaders: Nancy & Ron Gooding (phone 644 231)

DECEMBER Film Evening & Break-up

Date: Tuesday, December 10, 1985  
Place: Toowoomba Education Centre, Baker Street  
Time: 7.15 pm for 7.30 pm start  
Films: Three short films -  
"Migratory Birds in Korea"  
"Fairy Penguins"  
"Kingfisher"

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