

School of Education LEARNING STRANDS

ISSUE 1 WINTER 2018

Welcome

to the first School of Education newsletter. Thank-you for taking the time to catch-up with some of our activities and achievements in 2018. You will find a range of stories that provide a window into the life of our vibrant School, which serves others through education: locally, nationally, and internationally.

The past year has seen the welcome addition of a significant number of new staff (P.6). As we enter the new year, we will be seeking the appointment of the prestigious Nisbet Chair in Education, named after the University of Aberdeen's first Chair of Education: the late Professor John Nisbet OBE; the first President of BERA. As many of you will be aware, John Nisbet's reputation lives on, nationally and internationally, not least through the BERA John Nisbet Fellowship awards. I am hopeful that other key appointments will further strengthen Education's growing research profile in 2019.

We were proud to be the first School of Education in Scotland to be awarded Athena SWAN Bronze status. Building upon this in 2018, we are working towards Silver (P.3), as we seek to become a more inclusive School whom #EducatetoLiberate

It was a pleasure to welcome to the School this month the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education, and Science, Richard Lochhead MSP.



In addition to meeting Initial Teacher Education students, a roundtable discussion focused on Widening Access, an issue close to my heart. Education is working nationally to support access to Higher Education through its innovative Online Access courses (P.5).

Aberdeen continues to forge routes into teaching: DLITE (Secondary) builds upon our pioneering DLITE (Primary) programme, delivered in partnership with local authorities; while the Scottish Teaching Qualification supports teachers qualified elsewhere to gain qualification in Scotland.

In all of this and other activity, our learning community is enriched by the passion, knowledge, and experience, of the students and staff that comprise our School. I hope that you enjoy this brief snapshot into the life of our School.

Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2019

Dr David Smith Head of School of Education

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This newsletter was created by the School Communications Team.

We would like to extend our thanks to all our contributors.

If you would like to contribute to our next issue or have any questions please contact Lucy MacDonald,

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THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES GOOD UNIVERSITY **GUIDE** 2019 SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR

Improving Lives





Improving Women's Lives in Rwanda Through Education

Professor Pamela Abbott

Rwanda is seen as leading the fight for gender equality in Africa. It ranked 5th in the World on the World Economic Forum's 2016 Gender Gap Index. Certainly great strides have been made in improving the health and wellbeing of women since the devastating 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi left women to take responsibility for the welfare of their families, with a majority of male heads of household either dead or in prison.

It was the first country in the world in which women formed more than 50% of elected parliamentarians and it remains one of only two countries world-wide that has achieved the target of at least half the members of parliament being women. The Rwanda Constitution guarantees gender equality and it has some of the most progressive gender legislation in Africa. Women have equal rights with men in the ownership and inheritance of property (including land), in the family and in employment, and there is legislation on gender-based violence. A Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion is responsible for the strategic oversight of policy implementation, a Gender Monitoring Office reports on progress in implementation and women are represented by the Women's National Council at all levels from the village

(the lowest administrative level) to the national level. There is no doubt of the Government's commitment to promoting gender equality.

However, the research we have been carrying out in Rwanda for the last 10 years suggests that the reality on the ground for the vast majority of Rwandan women is very different. Ordinary Rwandan women may have been given rights but there is still a long way to go before a majority are empowered to claim and exercise these rights fully. According to the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index, despite the progressive legal and policy framework, Rwanda still has a medium level of gender discrimination, and although scoring comparatively well on the gender gap index, it scores much less well on the UN Gender Inequality Index, a score of just 0.363 with a rank of 84th in the world. This is because traditional gender values are still dominant, women as well as men continue to accept a gendered division of labour that advantages men and think that women should be submissive and subordinate to men. As one development partner explained:

'They go to church and the priest tells them that women were made from Adam's ribs. That it is a women's duty to obey their husbands and be their helpers.' Women are expected to behave appropriately and to obey their husbands, fathers and brothers. Men are expected by other members of the community to discipline their wives if they get out of line. As one group of young men explained:

'No, it is not right for a husband to hit his wife, but sometimes he just has to.'

Women on average work much longer hours than men when account is taken of the work they do collecting wood and water, looking after children, domestic work and going to the market. As a group of women told us:

'Look at our husbands: they still look young and handsome and they have lots of energy. We are old before our time, we are tired and have no energy and no longer look attractive.'

Men's work is much more valued than women's, with the long hours women spend cultivating seen as much less important than the day labouring men do for cash, even though most households mainly live off the crops women grow. Women's cultivation work is seen as just part of what women are expected to do. The emphasis on gender equality often makes life even more difficult for women, as they are expected to take on additional

work to earn a cash income, as a group of women explained to us: 'Our husbands tell us that now we have gender equality we have to go out and earn a cash income. So, as well as doing the cultivating, collecting wood and water, looking after the children, doing domestic work and going to the market we are expected to take on even more work. We just can't cope with all the demands that are made of us. We have no time to rest.'

Women have little control over resources; even when they know that they have joint ownership of land with their husbands they generally accept that it is men who 'really own' the land. It is also men who control the sale of surplus produce and generally decide how any cash income is spent. Men and women tell us that men spent money on alcohol while women have to ask or even beg for cash to purchase household essentials.

One of the main ways of promoting gender equality and empowering women is through education for men and women. The project we are implementing, Fostering a Social Practice Approach to Adult Literacies for Improving People's Quality of Life in Western Rwanda, aims to do just this. The project will use a studentcentred approach to learning, enabling learners to develop cognitive skills as well as knowledge and practical skills. Learners, men as well as women, will be encouraged to reflect critically on their everyday lives, including the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women. In this way we hope that our project will contribute to improving the lives of women as well as men in Western Rwanda through enabling women to claim and exercise their rights and convincing men of their right to do so.

Acknowledgement

The Fostering a Social Practice Approach to Adult Literacies for Improving People's Quality of Life in Western Rwanda is funded by the Scottish Government under its Scotland-Rwanda Fund. The project is led by the University of Aberdeen with the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research-Rwanda, the University of Rwanda College of Education, and Rubengera, Gacuba II and Mururu Teacher Training Colleges as in-country partners.



Athena Swan

Recognising commitment to the advancement of gender equality in academia.

The School of Education is committed to the advancement of gender equality. We were delighted to be the first School of Education in Scotland to achieve the Athena SWAN Bronze award in April 2017.

The Athena SWAN charter was expanded in May 2015 to recognise work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women. The Charter now recognises work supporting and embedding equality in Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, Business and Law (AHSSBL), and in Professional and Support roles, and for Trans staff and students.

To ensure the work of the School meets and explores aspects relating to gender equality, diversity, inclusion and transparency, the Equality and Diversity team was created. The group is co-chaired by Professor Donald Gray and Dr Carol Hickman with members from across the staffing profile.

In August, Dr Hickman presented at the Athena SWAN workshop hosted by the School of Education & Social Work, University of Dundee. The focus of the workshop was challenges and opportunities in achieving gender balance in the disciplines of Education, Social Work and Community Learning and Development. The workshop also provided an opportunity to discuss the establishment of a Scottish Network of Athena SWAN leads/SAT members in these disciplines.

The Education Equality and Diversity team will be taking forward the implementation of the Athena SWAN Action Plan and working towards a Silver Award application for submission in April 2021. As part of this process, the School needs to reflect upon and demonstrate the impact of actions taken associated with academic staff based on our Bronze award submission, to explore the issues and opportunities for our Support and Technical staff. In October a promotions event was held for academic staff, which involved a presentation by HR on the application process and assessment and provided an opportunity for attendees to explore experiences and perceptions of the promotions process. On 7 November, the Support and Technical team had a workshop to discuss Induction, Promotion, Training and Appraisal from their perspective. Feedback from both events will be used to ascertain what additional support could be provided by the School in these areas for staff.

To keep up to date with our Athena SWAN actions and initiatives visit www.abdn.ac.uk/people

One Seed Forward

As part of leading research in the field of Learning for Sustainability and Wellbeing, Professor Donald Gray from the School of Education has partnered with One Seed Forward, a voluntary organisation based in Aberdeen focussed on food growing in the local community.









City Council as part of the Aberdeen EcoCity Awards.

With funding awarded by Aberdeen City Council and the Health Improvement Fund, the project involved three primary schools in the city: Woodside, Tullos and Bramble Brae where students learn how to grow their own fresh fruit and vegetables in order to encourage a healthy lifestyle. Project Leader, Bob Donald, from One Seed Forward, hopes that this will be a first step for pupils to learn how to grow and enjoy their food, as well as acquiring important life-skills.

In each school, the children designed their own vegetable patches; chose and planted their seeds; and were responsible for watering, weeding, and maintaining them. A bumper crop of lettuce, strawberries, potatoes and other produce has been harvested in the last days of school before the holidays, with 100 kg of 25 different crops gathered by September.

Professor Gray, said the project had "ticked a lot of the Curriculum for Excellence boxes" and added: 'We have seen the children's engagement increase greatly. They are proud of what they have achieved and are keen on sharing their food and their knowledge with the younger children in the school. Pupils loved that it was "something important" and "something real."

'We were asked to focus on regeneration areas, in some of the poorest parts of the city. We had concerns at first due to the lack of past experience of food gardens in schools but the results have been impressive.'

'We are now going to write up our findings, but the evidence we have suggests, there are significant implications for learning, health and wellbeing of children – as well as the potential for community involvement.'

Professor Gray and Mr Donald have already begun further community involvement by participating in the George Street Farmers' Market and Sustainability Festival, held on 7th July. The education materials developed by the team were officially launched at the Aberdeen 'Let's Talk Community Food' Event at Aberdeen Town House on 8th November and were first launched in preview with Chinese teachers this month, as part of a 5 day professional development programme delivered by our former colleague Dr Colucci-Gray in Beijing. Aberdeen City Council have also committed to distributing the materials to all the city schools so that the initiative can run city-wide.

Updates and news from the initiative can be followed

- f www.facebook.com/groups/328844194333810/
- twitter.com/OSF_SchGardens

Access For All

Innovative online courses breaking down barriers for Scotland's future teachers

As Scotland looks to address challenges in teacher recruitment, the School of Education is helping would-be teachers to overcome a barrier preventing well-qualified candidates from entering the profession. The University of Aberdeen introduced pioneering Online Access courses to allow those who want to teach gain pre-requisite qualifications in Maths and English, adding Online Access Mathematics at SCQF 5 in summer 2018.

There is a great demand for teachers in Scotland, particularly in certain subject areas; and many people who have enjoyed successful careers in other industries want to meet that need.

Many are exceptionally well-qualified in the subject areas that they want to teach; however, given the responsibility of all for Literacy and Numeracy, all teachers are expected to demonstrate their ability in English and Mathematics. Aberdeen's experience of meeting prospective Student Teachers highlighted a gap in their own formal education in these subjects, which was holding them back from gaining entry to our Professional Graduate Diploma in Education, which educates many of our new teachers.

As a result, the University, with support from Scottish Government, has developed in partnership with Secondary School teachers from Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, an innovative online programme which enables students to take short courses, which can be joined 24/7 365 days a year and completed in a timeframe which suits the individual student's learning.

Making a career-change or continuing your education is a big undertaking and we wanted to widen access to allow potential teachers to make up for gaps in their own formal education as flexibly as possible. Education's Online Access courses are demanding, but they have kept flexibility at the heart of their development, allowing students to join whenever they choose and to exit the course at many points throughout the year – in order to support entry to the teaching profession throughout Scotland.

It means that if they need to complete quickly and are prepared to put in many additional hours of study, they can do so; but, if they are fitting study around work, family, and other commitments, they can take longer.

We wanted the students to dictate their own pace and place of learning, and to make the experience as interactive as possible with video and other engaging content.

Further information about Online Access is available at www.abdn.ac.uk/study/online/access-courses.php

'It was just what I needed. The flexible start dates and exit points suited me as you can complete the course in as little or long a time as you need. For me, the clock was ticking and I was able to get through the work in just five weeks but it did require a high level of commitment. Working frantically was well worth it though as it means I don't have to wait 12 months for the next intake of trainee teachers. Taking the course was a lovely experience from start to finish and it was great to be able to interact with my peers and get their feedback. It has been a nice introduction to becoming a student again.'

Paul Gibson, PGDE Engineering Science (UHI)

From Research to Teaching: Digital Bennachie

Dr Liz Curtis

Over the past six years Dr Liz Curtis has been working on a range of AHRC and Lottery funded community archaeology projects with the Bailies of Bennachie and colleagues from the School of Education and the wider University. One of the most recent projects has been the creation of an app which explores the lives of the people who lived on Bennachie in the 19th Century which was launched in June 2018 with children from Insch Primary school. Digital technology is part of the fabric everyday life particularly for young people and using the app (Bennachie Colony Trail: Apple App

Store and Google Play) is a great way to bring the otherwise difficult to comprehend ruinous humps and bumps of history to life while learning out of doors. Through carrying out research on how people, including school classes, learn through active participation in local archaeology projects Dr Curtis has developed what is now our 3rd Year MA Education Making History Professional Focus. This year thanks to a small grant the students were able to go on a fieldtrip to the Bennachie led by Garioch Ranger Alison Sutherland to test out the Colony

App for themselves. One of our students, Natalie Bremner commented that, 'it was something that I had never seen before and feel it was a useful tool for learning about the Colony Trail. It helped you to gain a whole picture of what the buildings would have looked like back then, and provided extra information which I found very useful when learning on the walk. It was an interesting way to look back into the past by just using the lens of your phone'.

Introducing Our New Staff

A warm welcome to all of our new staff who have joined the School in 2018.



DR YVONNE BAIN

Yvonne re-joined the School of Education after working at University of Dundee. Before that she had various roles at University of Aberdeen for over twenty years. Yvonne's research interests lie around professional learning through online learning and, as a member of InFo-TED, she is researching the professional learning of Teacher Educators in particular.

DR COLIN CHRISTIE

Colin worked at UCL Institute of Education in London as subject leader for PGCE Secondary Languages. In his new role in the School of Education he continues to work with secondary languages with primary and secondary Student Teachers. His research interests focus on language-related issues, particularly teacher and pupil use of the target language in school classrooms.



KATHERINE CROSS

Katherine originally joined the School of Education in October 2015 after working with Dot.Rural. She left in February 2016 to join Registry on a full time basis but returned this year to become School Support Assistant working predominantly with BA Childhood Practice, MEd EarlyYears and the undergraduate employability courses.

LESLEY ELPHINSTONE

For the past 18 years, Lesley has undertaken a number of roles in secondary education, including Faculty Head and Depute Head Teacher, working in the majority with pupils from areas of deprivation. She has always had an interest in how education can address the Poverty Gap and improve outcomes for children and young people.





CATHY FRANCIS

Cathy worked previously as a primary school teacher in England, Germany and Scotland. She became a Chartered Teacher, leading school initiatives in Science, sustainability and global partnerships. Cathy is working towards a PhD which explores embodied and experiential learning at the beach. Her teaching interests currently include outdoor learning and Health and Wellbeing.

FAYE HENDRY

Faye worked as a secondary English teacher before taking up post in the School of Education. She works on Primary and Secondary ITE, as well as the Online Access English Course. Her interests lie in the teaching of English and Literacy; in particular, creative ways to engage young people in literature, and to build student teachers' confidence in teaching grammar and writing.





FRASER HEPBURN

Fraser has twenty years of teaching experience in Chemistry and Science, as well as a number of years in pastoral & guidance roles. Fraser is the tutor for Chemistry ITE and also co-ordinates recruitment for secondary teaching applicants. Fraser's current area of interest is in the "mind on" approach to practical work.



AMY MACFARLANE

Prior to joining the Primary, Early Years team and Online Access teams, Amy worked as a Teacher and Head Teacher in Aberdeenshire primary schools. She also holds an honours degree in Management with Marketing and has previous experience working in HR and recruitment and has started working towards a Masters in Early Years Education.

JONATHAN READING

Jonathan was sponsored by the Ministry of Defence to complete his PhD in Chemistry, focusing on metal-insulator and superconducting oxide materials. Jonathan joined the Technicians team supporting PGDE Secondary Home Economics and Physics, and PGDE Primary/MA4/MA3 Primary Science following his career as a Field Service Engineer, developing advanced separation technologies for the oil and gas industry in Texas.

LIVIA TANASIE

Livia joined the Support Team in March 2018 and works with the on campus and distance learning PGDE programmes having spent over 9 years working in the oil and gas industry. She recently graduated from North East Scotland College with a CIPD Diploma in Human Resources and would like to study Counselling Skills at the University of Aberdeen.

Staff Spotlight

COLETTE SAVAGE Lecturer, Mindfulness

Hi, I am Colette. I arrived in Aberdeen in April and have been confounding my friends, (with endless cold weather jokes) with my weather reports ever since! Never having spent much time in Scotland, (Ireland has lots to offer too and kept me busy), I am delighted to be here.

I came to take up a post lecturing in Mindfulness, a return to academia, having had a previous incarnation as a Computer Science Lecturer in London, a few... moons ago! I love the remarkable students I meet on our blended learning MSc in Mindfulness and I am looking forward to meeting our Scottish teachers as I launch the GTCS Professional recognition in Mindfulness course shortly.



Mindfulness has been a passion of mine for many years. I have spent the last 6 years in Ireland delivering CPD in this and values education in teacher's centres around Ireland. I managed to train all the staff at one primary school in Dublin to be the first human value school in Ireland, which is proving a very popular approach to education.

Although I love to travel, I have a love for the diverse spiritual culture of India and have visited nearly 20 times in the last 15 years, meeting people facing incredible challenges with such fortitude and laughter. I also hand engrave glass and make stained glass windows when time permits and there is room to make a big mess in the process! Both these hobbies I took up many years ago in an attempt to develop my creative side whilst lecturing in computing. But my most favourite 'hobby' now is being part of the wonderment of my grandkids' lives and their incredible perspective on life.

I have to say how welcoming I have found the people of Aberdeen and in particular my colleagues in the School of Education, as I knew no-one when I arrived to take up the post. I have had so many wonderful interactions with the very helpful people here.

Summer 2018 Graduations





One of our Distance Learning PGDE (DLITE) graduates, Julie Mortimer, overcame significant challenges to fulfil her ambition to become a primary school teacher. She was able to juggle studying her PGDE while she worked and cared for her disabled daughter.



Donna Wilkie became the fifth member from the University's Rocking Horse Nursery to graduate with the BA Childhood Practice, our distance learning undergraduate degree for professionals working in nursery and early child care settings.





Awards

Congratulations to our student and staff award winners!



Student Awards 2018

- Ann Mackie Memorial Prize 2018
 Flora McCulloch, PGDE Primary
 This prize is awarded for excellence in school experience.
- Kay Prize 2018
 Megan Findlater, MA Education
 This award is presented to a Year 4 student who has been recognised by peers and tutors for their academic excellence.
- Steph Smith Award 2018
 Hazel Legge, MA Education
 This award is presented to a Year 4 student who has been recognised by peers and tutors for excellence in Professional Values and Personal Commitment.

- Richard Greig Award 2018
 Callum Kerry, PGDE Biology with Science
 This award is presented to a PGDE student for commitment to social justice and professionalism, which is deemed outstanding.
- Lyon Prize 2018
 Rhiann Campbell, MA Education
 This prize is awarded to the most distinguished graduate of the year.

Principal's Scholar Award 2018

Chloe Auchnie, MA Education (Year 3)

Congratulations to Chloe Auchnie who was awarded the Principal's Scholar Award for academic excellence and contribution to the School. Chloe was one of 12 students from throughout the University who received this award which was presented by the Principal, Professor George Boyne, on 29th October 2018.





Undergraduate Award for Excellence in Teaching 2018

Lorna Stewart, PGDE Programme Director (Primary)

Lorna was awarded the Undergraduate Award for Excellence in Teaching 2018 during the summer graduations. Academics across the University are nominated for this award for inspiring students and having a positive impact on student experience, as well as challenging students to achieve their best.

Student Spotlight

HELIA RAHBARIKORROYEH, PHD Student

My name is Helia. I moved from Stockholm to Aberdeen in 2016 to start my PhD. Compared to Stockholm, Aberdeen is not that cold, but believe it or not, we have more blue sky days up in the North.



Moving to Aberdeen and joining the School of Education was a change of direction in my professional life as well as offering me experiences of living in a new country. My academic background is in Social Anthropology and I have completed my Master' in Social Anthropology at Stockholm University, where I studied Arabic and Middle Eastern studies too.

In my time in Sweden, I have worked as a Journalist and Blogger among other jobs that I had. I used to write about social justice, women issues, migration and sometimes short columns on the cultural and political events happening in my country of origin, Iran. In Iran, I have studied Social Science and worked as a Teacher and Research Assistant.

I have been engaged in a couple of research projects in the University of Aberdeen working as a Research Assistant, before I started my internship at the Scottish Government in October 2018. I joined the Connected Community division of the Scottish Government to work on a project called 'Evidencing New Scots Refugees Integration'.

Now towards the end of my internship, I feel I have gained a whole new set of organisational skills and experiences which I would not be able to gain otherwise. I have also become more confident about the future direction of my career. Working in Migration Studies I feel at home, maybe not very surprising for a person such as myself, who is a migrant herself and whom has lived experiences of moving, rooting and building new life.

For more information visit the Scottish Government web site, New Scots: Refugee Integration Strategy 2018 - 2022 (https://beta.gov.scot/publications/new-scots-refugee-integration-strategy-2018-2022/pages/14/)

CALLUM KERRY

PGDE Biology with Science, Graduated 2018

I've always thought about becoming a teacher; however, I put the idea to the back of my head for ten years while I gained a BSc, an MSc, and worked in oil and gas. I continued to work with children and young people and during the two years before gaining a place on the PGDE course I worked with young people more and more, which gave me the confidence to apply.



The biggest hurdle for me was placements in school. This was daunting as I hadn't been in school for over ten years and wasn't taught in a Scottish school myself. The first day was nerve-wracking, but after the first chat with the Supporter Teacher I lost all my apprehensions. The whole school, from the Head Teacher to canteen staff, were lovely and so supportive of me, especially when I was asking hundreds of questions a day about all things from directions to social justice to PEF funding.

The highlight of School Experience for me was when I was teaching a lesson, and finally the idea or concept clicked with the pupils, and they understood. That is the best feeling, and you can really see in the pupils faces that they now understand and can use that information you have taught them.

The highlight of my whole year was winning the Richard Greig Award. This was unexpected and a total shock. It was great that the University recognised the amount of effort I put into the course. Apart from that, I would say the next biggest highlight of the year was getting time to bond with the Science and Biology students. The whole group got on really well, and this created such a good support network during the course. I would even go as far as saying the Biology group will still be providing support years later.

Research Update

PhD Success

Congratulations to the following students who successfully defended their PhD.

KHAWLA ADDOWEESH

Using 'Clickers' to Improve Student Achievement

HANA A.ALI MOHAMED

Learner Centred Interactive Processing Model of Reading EFL Short Fiction

MISHEL MORIAH

Leadership and Professional Development in a Caribbean Education Context

SAMUEL OPPONG FRIMPONG

An Investigation into the Quality of Early Childhood Education Delivery in Ghana

GERALDINE PRINCE

Art-Making and the Interpretation of Cultures: Cross-cultural teaching and learning in Edinburgh and Dubai

JESSICA SINGER

Being and Becoming: The creative balance of the artist teacher

JANE KELLOCK

Living a Mindful Life: A hermeneutic phenemonological inquiry into the lived experience of secular mindfulness, compassion and insight



Education in the North

On Wednesday 19th September, a Special Issue of the journal Education in the North was launched in Old Aberdeen with contributions from Canada, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. The focus was on teacher education and teaching in the Arctic Regions, entitled Education in the Artic.

The Issue is an initiative of the University of the Arctic (UArctic) Thematic Network on Teacher Education for Social Justice and Diversity, established in 2015. The Thematic Network contributed to the Arctic Council Finnish Chairmanship priority of education, and also leads the Sustainable Development Working Group project 'Teacher Education for Diversity and Equality in the Arctic'. The project aims to enhance the understanding of the teaching profession in the circumpolar north and to highlight ways in which both pre-service and in-service Teacher Education can assist teachers in actively contributing to the Arctic's sustainable future.

To view the journal visit: www.abdn.ac.uk/eitn

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Articles

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Articles

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