



# The Midnight Messenger

Easter Issue

## Straight to work at the Wiggly Warren

*News and views from the factory floor*

*Fairy journalist, Eleanor Quickwing is back on Easter Island, finding out how the preparations for Easter are going. The Easter Bunny is nowhere to be seen but the Wiggly Warren is chocablock with helpers of all shapes and sizes and some other, not so welcome guests...*

**You won't be surprised to hear that this month the Wiggly Warren is bursting at the seams!** There are creatures absolutely everywhere – and chocolate of course.

I'm deep down underground, watching the Easter Bunny's helpers as they spend their days bustling to and fro along a maze of tunnels, carrying piles of chocolate, sweets and other treats to be wrapped and packed for Easter. It's hard to go anywhere in the warren without bumping into them. Every room has somebody in it checking lists of good children, decorating eggs, or arranging Easter baskets.

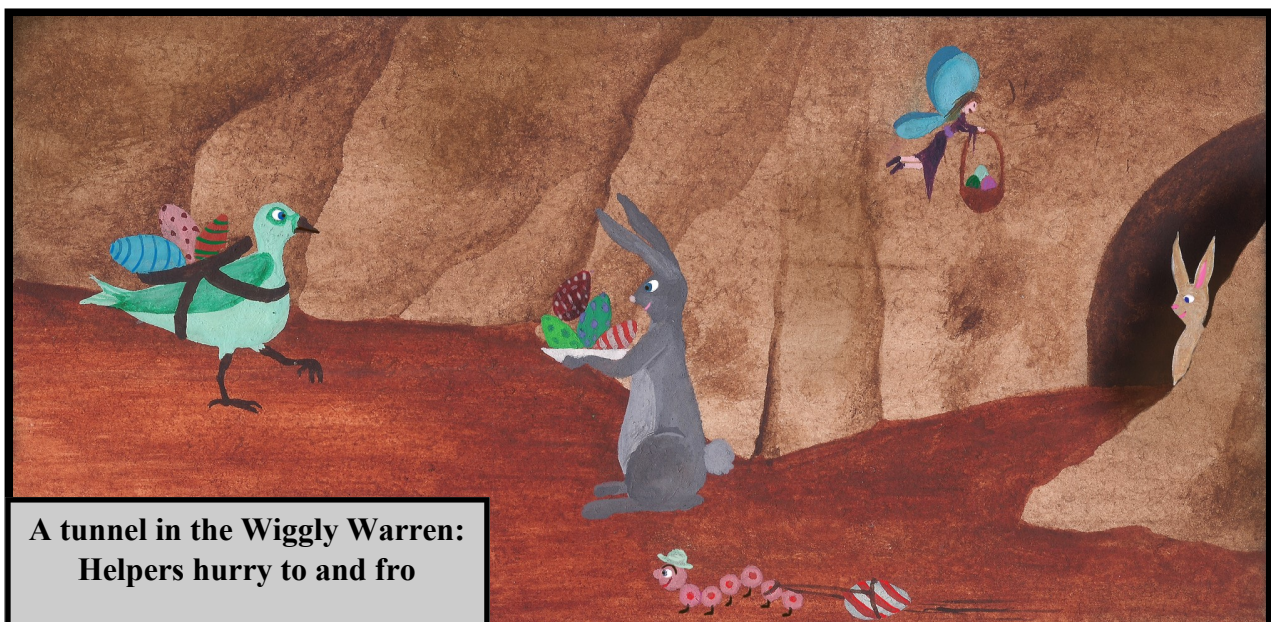
It's looking ever so festive. Vases of

daffodils have appeared overnight on every table and windowsill and shelf, and underneath each one is a little dish of chocolate eggs, so that those who feel peckish can nibble as they work. As soon as the dishes are empty, they magically fill themselves up again and the daffodils make a soft, trumpeting sound all day long, which I'm told is very relaxing when you've got a lot to do.

Mr Chocochoops, a round hedgehog who is the Easter Bunny's chief taster, works in several different rooms a day just so he can listen to all the different flowers sing. Or at least that's what *he* told me; Ms Hoppalong, a small black rabbit who works alongside him has other ideas.

"All this changing rooms has nothing to do with listening to music," she said, "but it does give him a daily excuse to gobble up several different kinds of chocolate eggs!"

In spite of Easter looming, the Easter Bunny herself is rarely about. Word is she spends most of her time in the upper levels of the warren, in Butterscotch Burrow,



**A tunnel in the Wiggly Warren:  
Helpers hurry to and fro**



where she lives. Unfortunately, the doors to her quarters are magically sealed with passwords I don't have access to, so I haven't been able to get in yet to see how she is.

I did manage to ask one of the Easter Bunny's closest friends, the Easter Dragon, why no-one had seen her in a while, and had this to say:

"Yeah – well she's busy, see?!"

A dragon of few words it seems. I'm quite glad he's not *my* best friend on this out-of-the-way-island where most folk make their own entertainment. Our conversations would be a trifle one sided I fear!

It's a worrying time for the Easter Bunny to be absent, because although it might look as if everything is running smoothly on the factory floor, it isn't. Ms Yellowfeather, a hard working chicken, revealed that behind closed doors there has been a good deal of trouble brewing in the storerooms thanks to an old pest – Sugar Toothed Worms.

For those of you who don't know, Sugar Toothed Worms are wriggly, worm-shaped creatures with chocolate brown skin, eyes the colour of yellow flames, giant mouths full of teeth and giant appetites to match. They live deep under the earth, far below the warren, and every now and then they burrow their way upwards and gobble up as many sweet things as they can find. This April, rumour has it they've eaten at least a month's supply of chocolate already.

Unfortunately, they are very difficult to catch because they never come



**Sugar Toothed Worm**

all the way up out of the floor, being at least a mile long. As soon as they see any of the Easter Bunny's helpers, they slither straight back down into the earth and nobody, (not even the rabbits), can dig fast enough to catch them.

Until now, helpers have kept these chocolate guzzling thieves at bay by pouring treacle down their holes whenever they find them, so they can't get back up without getting stuck. But the worms have got wise to this and started sneaking up in the dead of night to steal all the barrels of treacle they can find. There's hardly a drop left in the entire factory, meaning the Sugar Toothed Worms have been free to create as many new holes as they like.

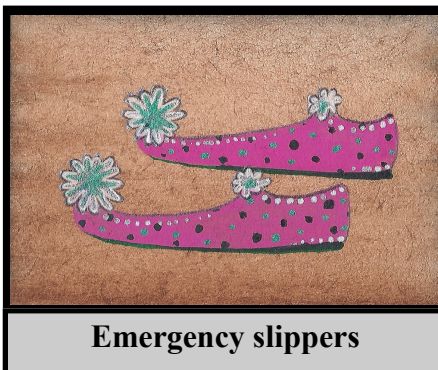
"They've been popping up all over the place!" Ms Yellowfeather complained.

Desperate to stop them slithering off with more chocolate than ever, the Easter Bunny's helpers have enlisted outside aid. Jack Frost has been called to the island from his snow-topped mountain home to lend a hand. I found him in a storeroom, freezing all the floors so that the earth would be too hard for the worms to break through. A good idea, except that if you have to work in a storeroom with an icy floor your feet get extremely cold



**Jack Frost freezes a floor**

and as many of the helpers don't wear shoes, everyone has had to be issued with a pair of emergency slippers to keep their feet warm.



**Emergency slippers**

But it has to be said that some helpers have had trouble with this. One, a crow called Cacklecaw, who wears his slippers on a string around his neck when he's not in a storeroom,

summed the problem up.

"The slippers are all very well if you



**Cacklecaw the crow**

have feet, but it's a different matter with claws. My toes need to be spread out so I can balance and the slippers are far too narrow. I don't wear them more than I can help – I'd rather put up with the cold!" On the up side he did add, "They're a nice silvery colour though aren't they? I couldn't throw them away – far too pretty – I might make an Easter present of them to one of the magpies in the tree next door."

The other problem with frozen floors is that eventually they'll melt and go soft again, unless Jack Frost is going to stay on

**"The slippers are all very well if you have feet, but it's a different matter with claws."**

the island permanently! And where would the rest of us be without those icy patterns to enjoy on our windows during the coldest parts of the year?

When I put this to our icy friend, he assured me, "I'm just a quick fix to get them through Easter. After that they'll have to think of another way to stop the worms." The idea of staying here on a permanent basis didn't appeal anyway, as he made it clear he thought it was "a very nice island and all that, but much too warm."

So, the Sugar Toothed Worms have been thwarted for now. They'll definitely get a headache if they try shooting up through ground as hard as ice... and it's good to know the Easter treats are safe. Who knows, perhaps when the Bunny's back, she'll think of a way to put a stop to them permanently.

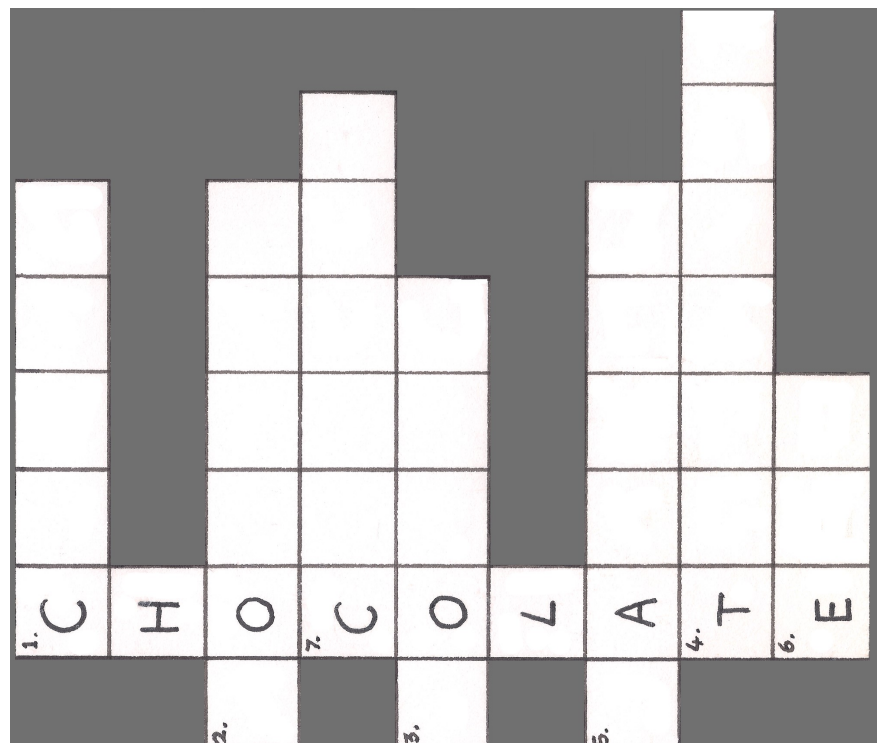
*Eleanor Quickwing*

## Easter Crossword

Can you read the clues and finish the crossword below:

### CLUES:

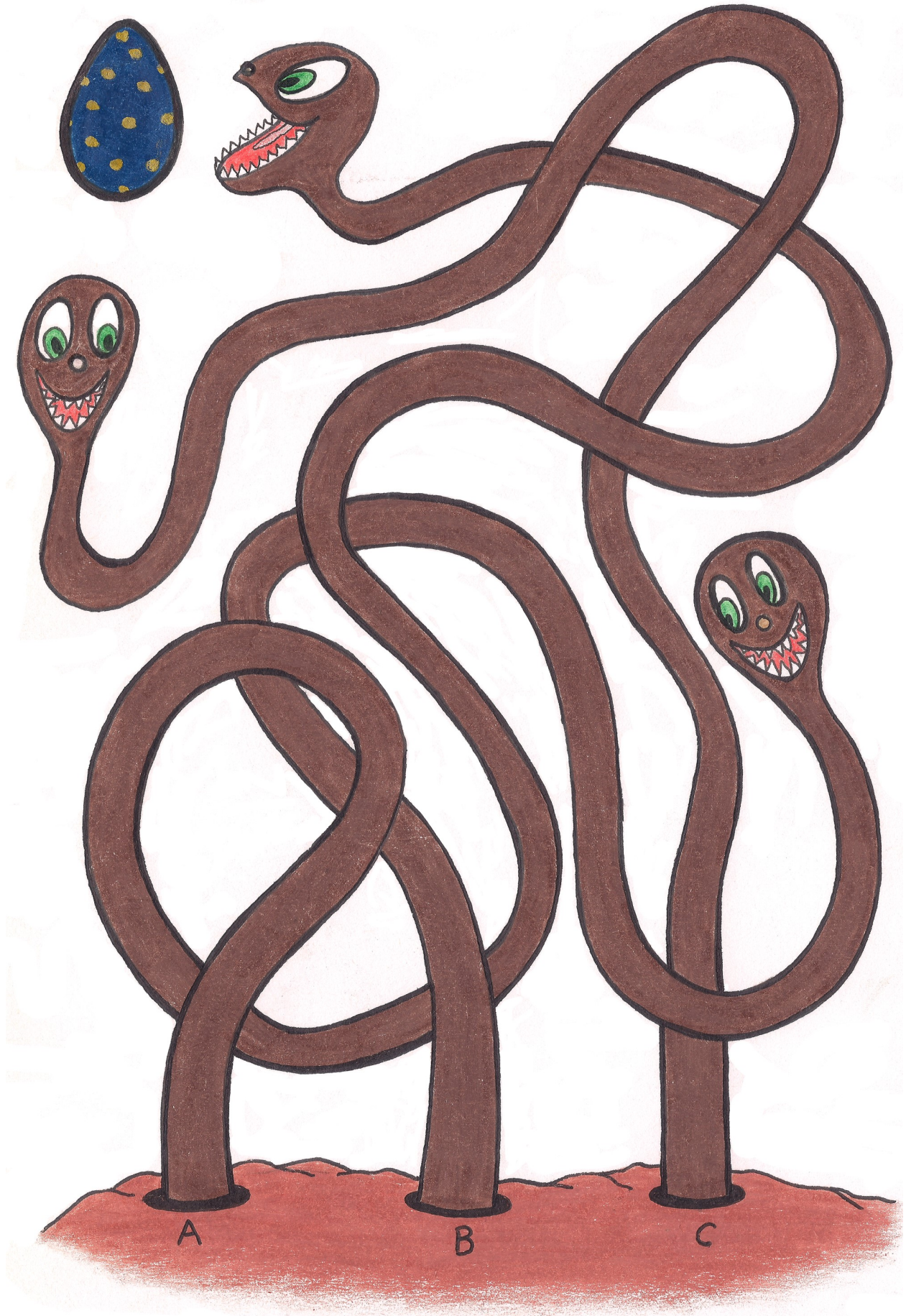
1. Baby chicken
2. Easter hat
3. Chocolate is made from this.
4. A sugary mixture which the Easter Bunny's helpers used to pour down holes to stop the Sugar Toothed Worms.
5. The Easter Bunny is one.
6. You can eat this boiled, fried, poached or scrambled.
7. One of the Easter Bunny's favourite foods (see page 7).





## Which Worm?

One of these Sugar Toothed Worms is about to gobble up an Easter egg. Can you tell which one it is?

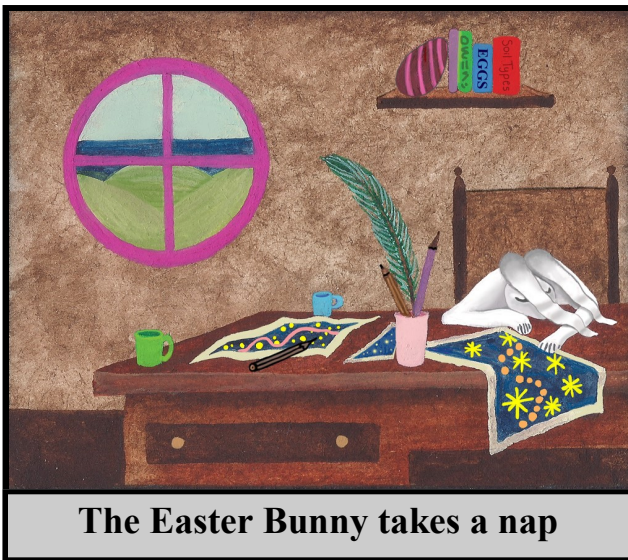




# Planning a path through the stars

*At last one of our magical reporters, the Gossiping Ghost, has managed to sneak into Butterscotch Burrow on the quiet and find out what the Easter Bunny has been up to as of late...*

**Butterscotch Burrow is a mess!** I slipped through one of the walls last night to find an office littered with papers, sweet wrappers, half drunk cups of dandelion tea and the Easter Bunny fast asleep at her desk. Obviously, she's been overdoing it on the work front. I drifted over for a better



**The Easter Bunny takes a nap**

look.

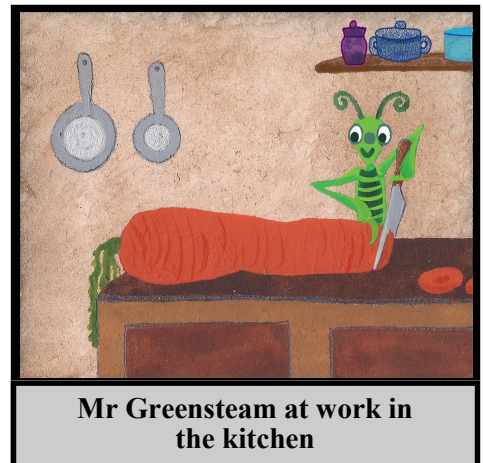
Upon closer inspection, the papers on the desk turned out to be maps of the stars. They didn't belong to the Easter Bunny, but it was pretty clear where they'd come from, because each had "FC" written in red on the corner, which as we all know, stands for *Father Christmas*. Next to them was a letter in Santa's curly handwriting, which read:

"Dear EB, when it comes to getting around the world in one night, the trick isn't only to do it quickly but to find the safest route as well. Don't take any short cuts over the North Pole. The snow storms are particularly ferocious at the moment and my elves won't be around to pick you up if you fall out of the sky, because we've had a nasty outbreak of colds at Christmas House and most of them are ill in bed. I'd avoid flying low over Scotland as well if I were

you, because I heard that some of the giants in the highlands are having their Midnight Rock Throwing Competition this Easter, and you wouldn't want one of those hitting you on the head! I've sent you some of my star maps to help you plan your journey safely and if you decide not to take the dragon, you can always borrow one of my reindeer instead. Good luck with it all! Love, FC P.S. If you know any good cures for colds, let me know!"

By the look of the quill in her paw and the pot of ink spilled on the desk, the Easter Bunny had been about to write back before she fell asleep. It was a shame she hadn't started, as a few words from her might have given me more clues as to what was going on. Clearly, the busy bunny has been having trouble trying to decide which way to travel around the world. But as everyone knows, she has hundreds of magical tunnels which run deep under the Earth's oceans and pop up in every land imaginable, so why wasn't she taking one of those?

To find out more, I floated through another wall and came across a kitchen. Sitting at a table, Mr Greensteam the grasshopper, known to be the best chef on the island and one of the Easter Bunny's most trusted friends, was busily making a large cream-



**Mr Greensteam at work in the kitchen**

carrot trifle for tea. When I asked him about the Easter Bunny's upcoming trip, he was pleased to tell me what he knew.

"Oh yes, it's no secret! I saw the maps the other day. She's had a bit of bother in the tunnels lately. The one under the Atlantic sprang a leak and about half of them have filled up with seawater. It'll all get fixed of course, but not in time for Easter I'm afraid. So the Bunny in Chief's mak-



ing other delivery arrangements. Lucky for her she's mates with that dragon, the big purple job that lives in a cave on the other side of the island. The Easter Dragon, they call him. Only trouble is, he's a nervous soul for a giant scary lizardy thing, isn't he?"

I nodded, remembering only too well when a friend of mine visited the Easter Dragon's cave to interview him and accidentally blew his bedside lamp out. He was so afraid of the dark that he panicked

### **"He's a nervous soul for a giant scary lizardy thing"**

and tried to set fire to every bit of furniture he'd got, just to get a little light.

Mr Greensteam went on: "And he's developed a fear of heights. Bit of an issue if you've got wings growing out your back. Goodness knows how he's going to fly all arround the world with the Easter Bunny and her eggs."

A bit of an issue indeed. I finally got to ask the Easter Bunny about it myself

when Mr Greensteam said he'd have to wake her up for lunch.

The poor old rabbit looked very tired but perked up at the taste of Mr Greensteam's best grass stew.

"Yes!" she confirmed between mouthfuls, "I'm definitely flying around the world this Easter. I've used the star maps to plan the route and I've ordered a special type of fairy dust to make us invisible."

When I asked about the Easter Dragon's fear of heights, she had this to say: "I'm not too concerned. He'll get over it once he's in the sky. After all, he's been flying for hundreds of years. And if he doesn't, well, I'll mention that I might replace him with a reindeer... Trust me, he'll be up in the air like a shot to prove he's better at flying! It's well known that he dislikes reindeer, says that if they were meant to fly they'd have been born with wings."

As I float away out of the burrow and over the sea, I wonder what he'd make of me!

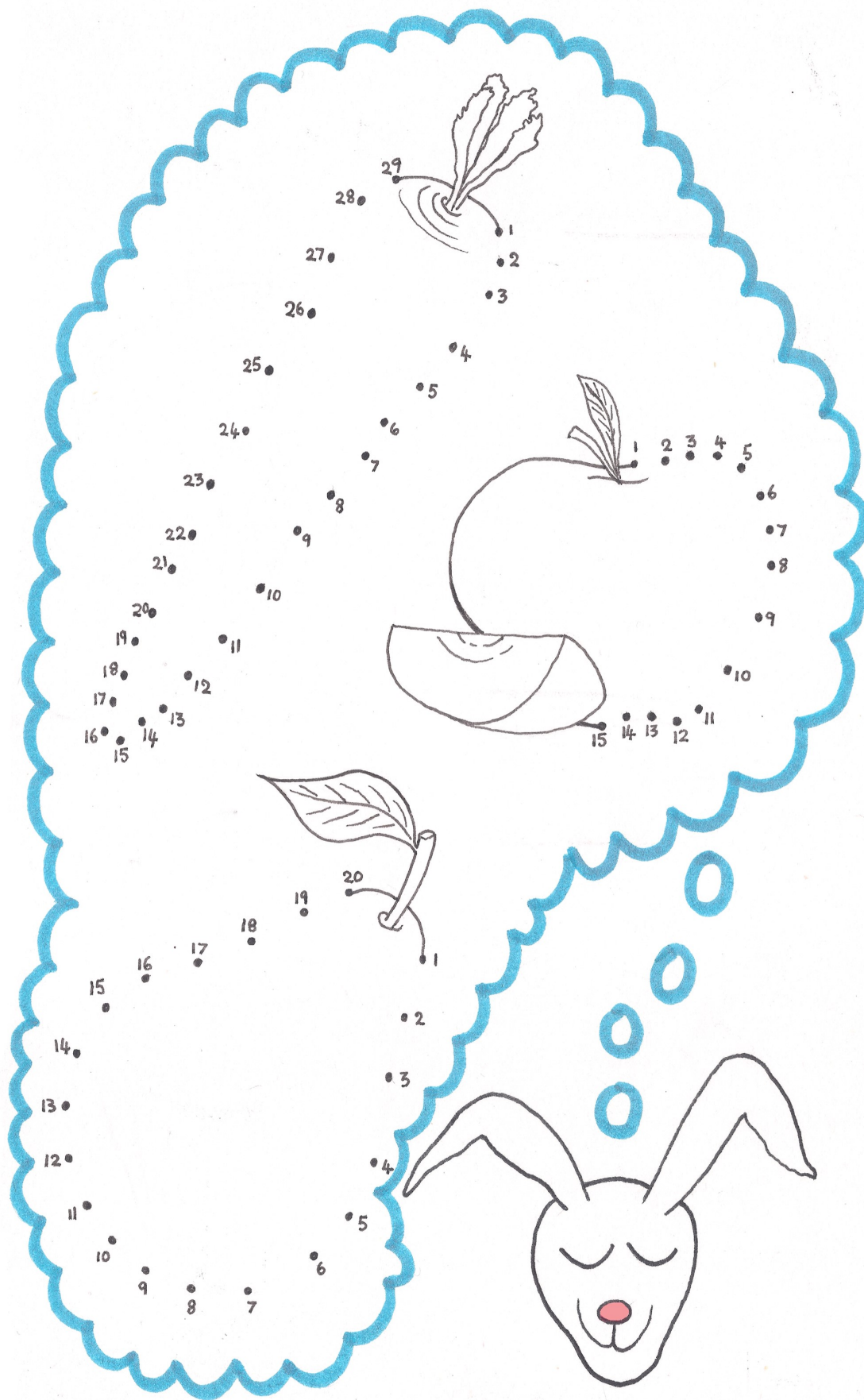
*The Gossiping Ghost*



The Easter Dragon flying through the sky before he was afraid of heights

## Delicious Dreams

The Easter Bunny is dreaming about her favourite foods. Can you join the dots and find out what they are?





## Brush with the Tooth Fairy ...she's full of advice



*Mr Squigglesqueak, our meandering mouse, heads over to Clean Cloud County and hears some wise words from the Tooth Fairy which we all should bear in mind...*

**I caught up with** the Tooth Fairy high above the clouds last week. She was hanging off a piece of scaffolding at the time, supervising the building of the long awaited Tower of Magical Knowhow, where the Fairy Council is going to house a new library of magical books for everyone in Fairyland to use. The previous library, hidden in a series of secret underground caves below Spain, was unfortunately



Fairy buildings in the clouds

attacked by rock-goblins last year and has been abandoned ever since.

The high

flying fairy was short on time when I saw her, but when I asked her if there was anything she would like to say to Midnight Messenger readers this Easter, she took a quick break. In between laying tooth-bricks and mixing cement, she made me a quick cup of rainbow tea and asked me to “remind all the children that one of the most important things about Easter is to remember to brush your teeth. Especially at night if you’ve been eating chocolate all day.” She patted the side of the white fairy tower and added, “Remember that rotten

**“One of the most important things about Easter is to remember to brush your teeth”**

teeth are no use to me, they have to be good and strong so that I can use them for my buildings in the sky!”

She went back to work after that and as I passed more glistening white towers on my way home, I thought to myself that my own teeth could do with a good brush tonight!

*Mr Squigglesqueak*

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF... ...THE NORTH WIND

**What time do you get up and start your day?**

I don’t because I don’t really sleep. Not like you do. Sometimes I relax and daydream as I’m blowing around the world but I never stop moving. If a wind stops blowing, it just disappears!

**In the morning, what’s the first thing you do?**

Well that depends. If it’s a clear day I like to breeze over to the west and watch the sun rise over the sea. If it’s raining I fly high above the clouds and have a chat with the stars for a while instead of having to get wet.



I don’t like rain - it slows me down.

**What do you do for lunch?**

Nothing, I don’t need to eat or drink.

**When you’re not working, what do you do to relax?**

I work most of the time, somewhere. I relax while I’m at work by blowing low over fields of long grass. It tickles my stomach and makes me laugh!

**What time do you go to bed?**

I don’t.

**If you could do any other job instead, what would it be?**

Hmm. That’s difficult because I do enjoy flying about being a wind. The only thing I’d like to be is a bit more colourful, I’m very blue you see. I’d like to be a butterfly I think.