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Ready for the great London egg hunt

Ross Lydall
21 Feb 2012

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Humpty Dumpty today sat on a wall with two of the future king's soldiers on hand to make sure he doesn't have a great fall.

The 2.5ft fibreglass egg was placed on the wall of Prince Charles's London residence, Clarence House, to mark tomorrow's launch of a charity event aiming to raise £2 million.

Organisers hope more than 10,000 Londoners will join the search for more than 200 eggs placed across the city, enabling them to break the world record for such an event.

Each egg has a code and finders can text-in to get a chance of winning a £100,000 prize offered by sponsors Fabergé. A map can be downloaded from the Big Egg Hunt website offering clues to each egg's location.

The eggs have been created by artists, designers and jewellers from Zaha Hadid, who did the Olympics aquatics centre, to Sir Peter Blake, Vivienne Westwood and Theo Fennell.

Humpty Dumpty was the work of The Prince's Drawing School, after an idea from Charles and Camilla.

The royal couple also suggested two lines that have been added to the back of Humpty: "Humpty Dumpty is always a favourite nursery rhyme character. We love having him sitting on our wall and, of course, we hope he doesn't fall off!"

The varnished egg, wearing a waistcoat sporting the Prince of Wales feathers, looks out over The Mall. He has been placed high up but two Welsh Guards are on hand to protect against any mishaps.

Other eggs, including one painted in a Union flag and another as a postbox, were today on show at Potters Field, beside that other giant egg, City Hall. Another egg, made from gold lattice work, was delivered to The Ritz.

The Fabergé Big Egg Hunt is being organised by Mark Shand, the Duchess of Cornwall's brother, in aid of his Elephant Family organisation, which works to safeguard the Asian elephant, and Action for Children, formerly NCH.

Thirty of the eggs will be auctioned on March 20 and the rest will be sold off in an online auction. The egg hunt runs from Shrove Tuesday until April 3.

Mr Shand said: "It really is an outstanding egg, and Humpty Dumpty is a fabulous character. I think he is going to be very sought after. I think it is a first that Humpty Dumpty has sat on a wall outside a palace. There is the added cache they both signed it as well."

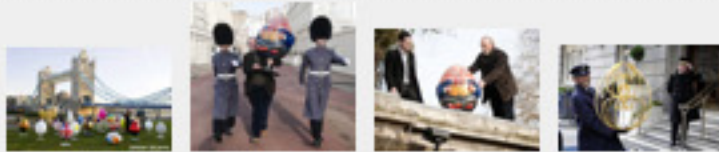
The origins of Humpty's name are unclear. One theory is that he was a cannon used by royalists to defend Colchester against Cromwell. Legend has it that when the wall was damaged, the cannon fell and the King's soldiers couldn't get it back up.

Another theory is that Humpty Dumpty, also 18th-century slang for a short and clumsy person, was named after an intoxicating cocktail of brandy boiled with wine.



JEREMY SELWYN

Cracking sight: some of the eggs attract attention at Potters Fields Park by Tower Bridge today



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