

MISTLECOMBE

the Christmas Eve clue book

Snowed in on Christmas Eve, one poisoned cup of eggnog, and 271 doors to check before the bells ring in Christmas morning.

Christmas Eve in Mistlecombe. The snow has closed the only road, the carolers are on their third lap of the green, and Mr. Ambrose Haddow, judge of the village gingerbread contest for thirty-one unforgiving years, has been found in the bakery's cold room with an empty cup of eggnog and the blue ribbon still in his pocket.

Someone in Mistlecombe did not care for his verdict.

Two hundred seventy-one homes. Four snowbound districts. One door that should have stayed shut. Read the clues, color the households they clear, and follow the flour wherever it leads. The early clues clear whole streets; the last ones come down to a single doorstep.

271 homes - four districts - one door

And something is hidden in the colors. You will know it when you see it.

A free small case, printable and finished in one evening by the fire.

*Sharpen your pencils. Pour the cocoa. Skip the eggnog. And when one door remains: knock.
Merry Christmas.*

How to solve

Read the clues in order, or in any order you please - every clue is true, and no clue depends on another.

Each clue clears a set of homes completely. Find those homes on the district plates and color them in the clue's color.

Streets run east to west and are named; avenues run north to south and are numbered. Avenue numbers are printed above every plate and on each house's number plaque, so a clue like 'from 13th avenue to 16th avenue' reads the same on any page. A home's number is its avenue: No. 7 Hollins street stands where 7th avenue crosses Hollins street.

And one rule of the surveyor's tongue: every span in this book includes both of its ends. 'From 1st avenue to 3rd avenue' means the 1st, the 2nd, AND the 3rd; 'from Ashbough to Clovepin street' means all three streets. No home ever hides between the words.

The killer's home is never cleared by any clue. When the last clue is spent, the one uncolored door in all of Mistlecombe belongs to the killer.

Leave the little white number plaques uncolored as you go - you will need to read addresses until the very end.

The legend

- A **Alibis** - GREEN pencil - who was seen elsewhere and accounted for
- W **Witnesses** - PURPLE pencil - what sleepless watchers can swear to
- G **Geography** - ORANGE pencil - what the ground itself testifies
- T **Timelines** - RED pencil - who could not have made the journey in time
- F **The Flour Trail** - YELLOW pencil - the trail - color it with your brightest

Every color is in any basic 12-pack of pencils - but any five colors will do, so long as each clue type keeps one color throughout. Prefer not to color, or can't tell the colors apart? Write the badge letter (A, W, G, T, F) in each cleared home instead. The puzzle solves identically either way.

The district plates

The four plates of Mistlecombe follow, one to a page, sized for a home printer. Margin marks on each plate point to the neighboring district. The church, the bakery, the fountain and the carol green are drawn where they stand; they are not homes and are never colored.

The streets of Mistlecombe

Fourteen streets, north to south. Every street runs the whole village, from avenue 1 in the west to avenue 20 in the east. Plates I and II hold the northern streets, Ashbough to Goosegate; Plates III and IV hold the southern streets, Hollins to Noggin. Avenues 1-10 are on Plates I and III, avenues 11-20 on Plates II and IV.

Ashbough street

Bellcote street

Clovepin street

Dimity street

Elderberry street

Fireside street

Goosegate street

Hollins street

Inglewood street

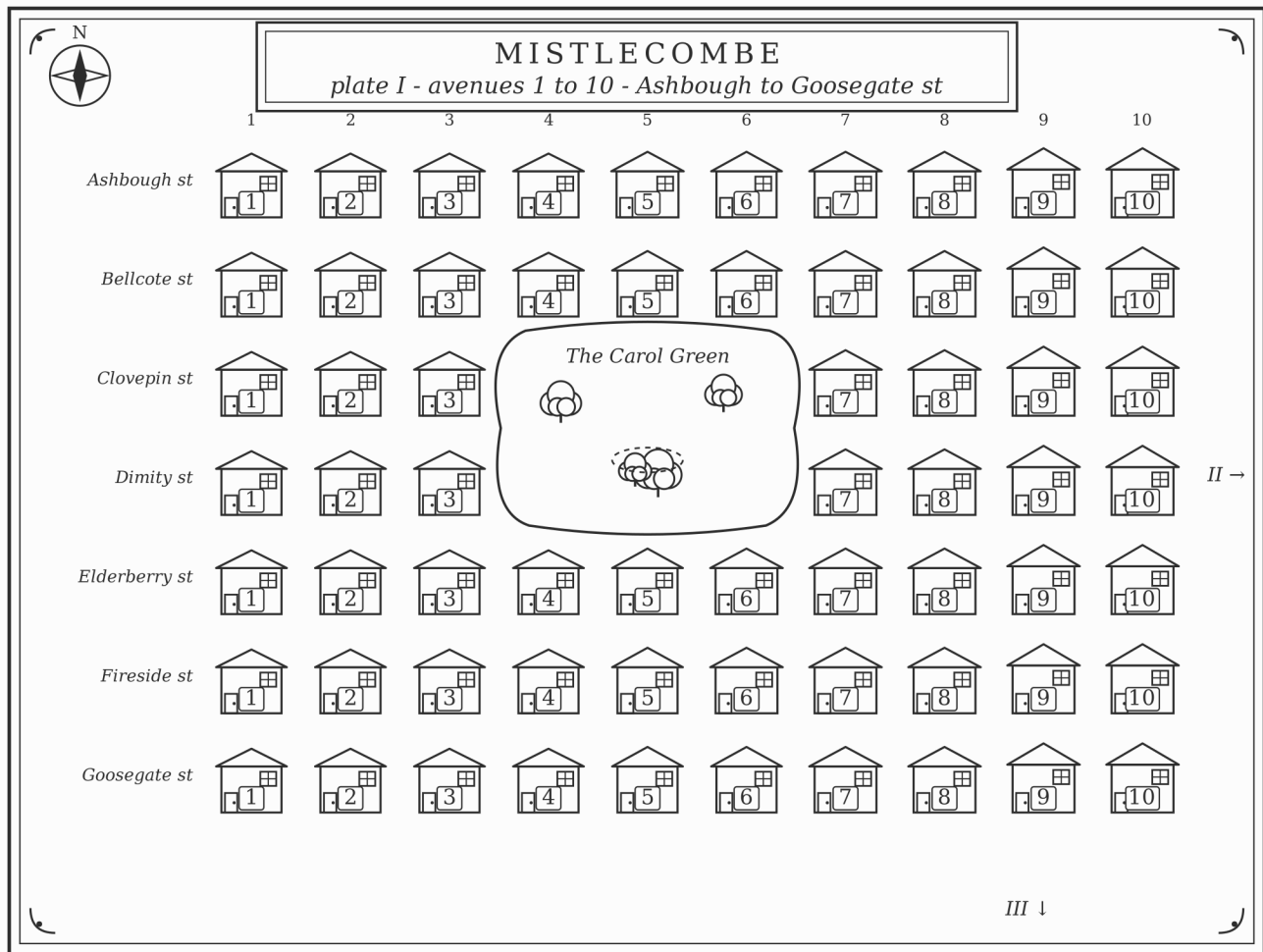
Jackfrost street

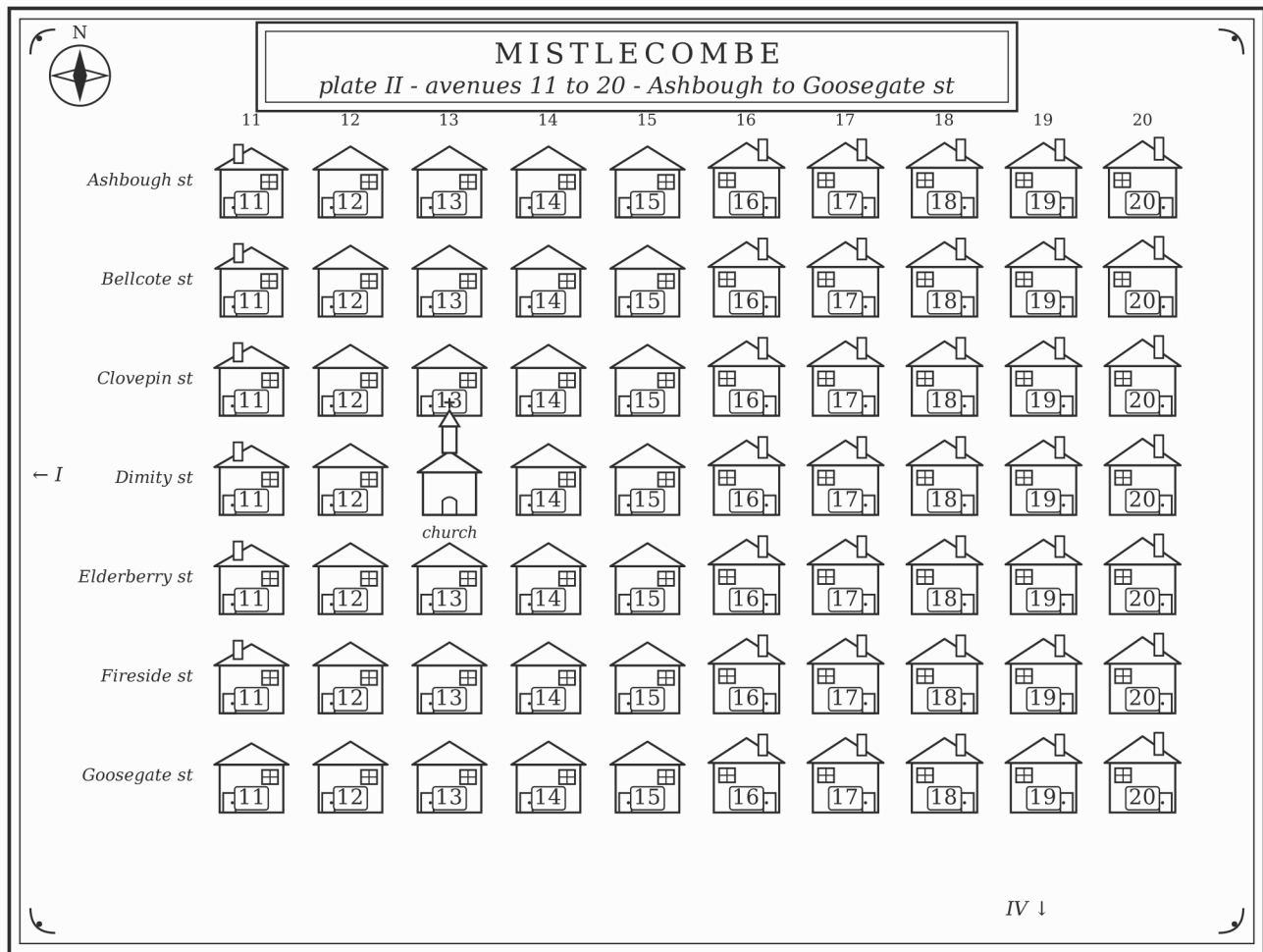
Kindlewood street

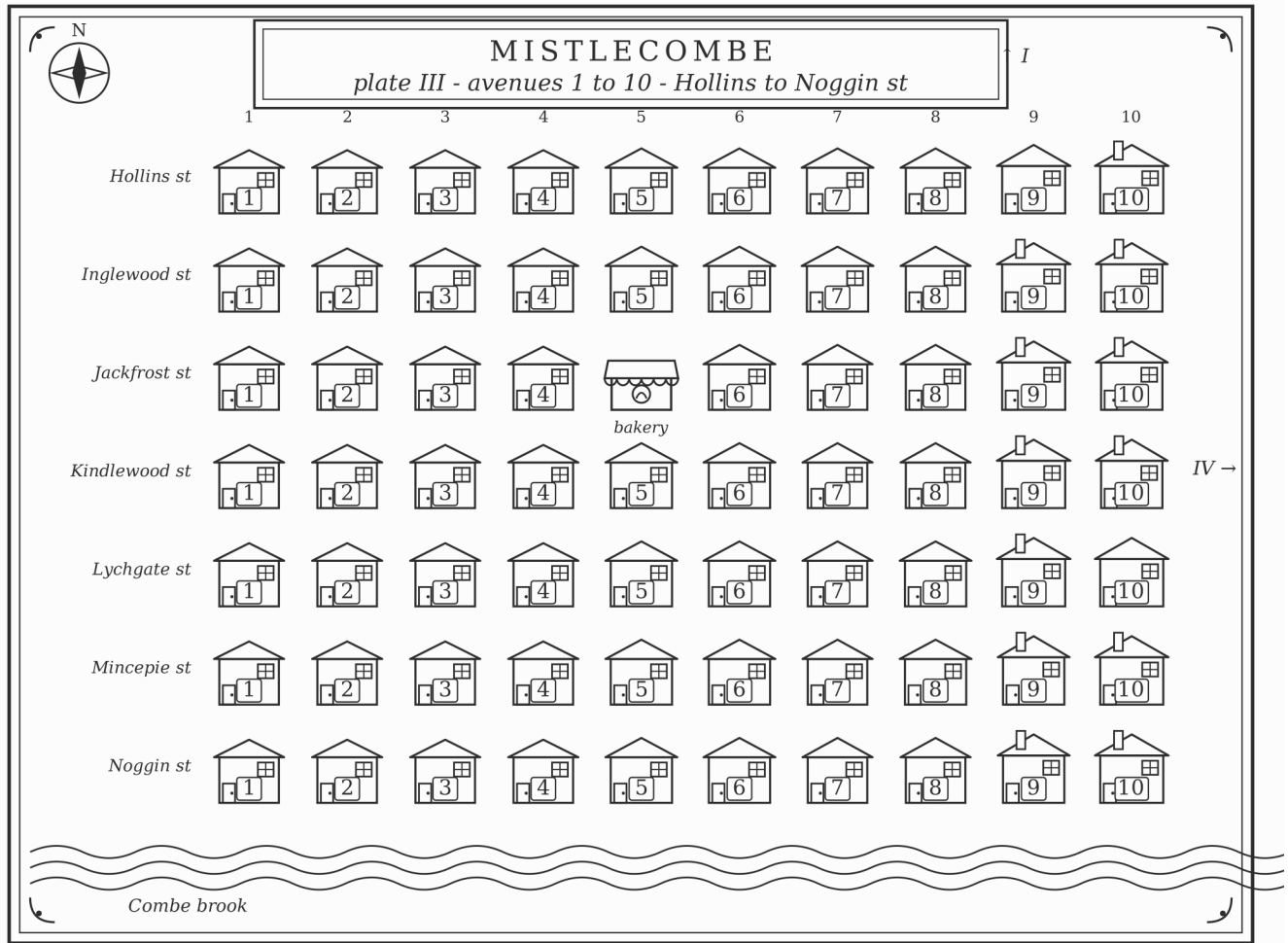
Lychgate street

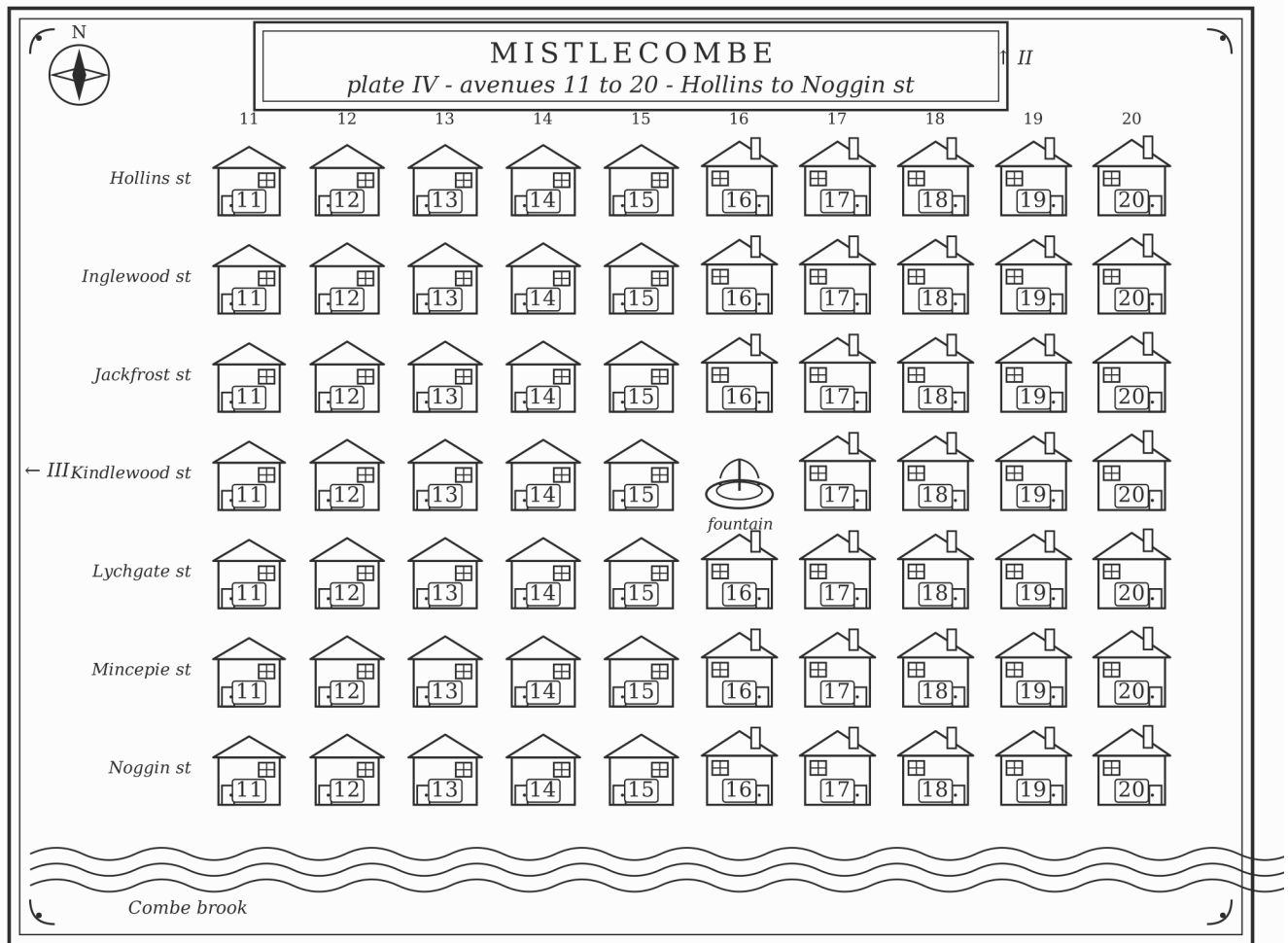
Mincepie street

Noggin street









The clues

Solve at whatever pace the evening allows. The early clues clear whole streets; the late ones come down to single doors.

1. [G] GEOGRAPHY - ORANGE

The cold room floor was gritty with coal dust. The homes from 17th avenue to 20th avenue, from Dimity to Lychgate street, burn only wood - clean boots, clean consciences.

2. [W] WITNESSES - PURPLE

The verger's terrier, who barks at every snowflake, slept clean through his round from 1st avenue to 3rd avenue, from Ashbough to Jackfrost street - nobody stirred there.

3. [T] TIMELINES - RED

Count the minutes yourself: for every home from 1st avenue to 7th avenue, from Lychgate to Noggin street, the walk through snow this deep is too long. Every one of them is cleared.

4. [W] WITNESSES - PURPLE

The night watchman walked from 4th avenue to 6th avenue, from Elderberry to Inglewood street, and swears every door he passed stayed shut.

5. [A] ALIBIS - GREEN

Every household from 14th avenue to 15th avenue, from Ashbough to Goosegate street, was gathered round one fire or another when it happened - snowed in together, all accounted for.

6. [G] GEOGRAPHY - ORANGE

The cold room floor was gritty with coal dust. The homes at 16th avenue, from Ashbough to Jackfrost street, burn only wood - clean boots, clean consciences.

7. [T] TIMELINES - RED

The lane on that side was drifted shut until midnight; nobody from 16th avenue to 20th avenue, from Mincepie to Noggin street, could have got through in time.

8. [F] THE FLOUR TRAIL - YELLOW

The baker's sack had a hole in it. Follow the white line on Jackfrost street from 6th avenue to 15th avenue: every home it passes is cleared.

9. [F] THE FLOUR TRAIL - YELLOW

Every step on Kindlewood street from 6th avenue to 15th avenue wears flour like a second snowfall - passed, and therefore innocent.

10. [G] GEOGRAPHY - ORANGE

Lamps were lit on the odd side that night, and a lit porch hides nothing - every odd-numbered home from 8th avenue to 15th avenue, from Mincepie to Noggin street, is cleared.

11. [G] GEOGRAPHY - ORANGE

The killer kept to one side of the road: every even-numbered home from 8th avenue to 15th avenue, from Mincepie to Noggin street, is cleared.

12. [W] WITNESSES - PURPLE

The night watchman walked from 4th avenue to 7th avenue, from Ashbough to Bellcote street, and swears every door he passed stayed shut.

13. [G] GEOGRAPHY - ORANGE

Whoever did it crossed the frozen millpond; no home from 17th avenue to 20th avenue, from Ashbough to Bellcote street, has a path down to the ice.

14. [F] THE FLOUR TRAIL - YELLOW

Flour dusted every doorstep on Hollins street from 7th avenue to 14th avenue - the killer passed them all, so none of them is the killer.

15. [F] THE FLOUR TRAIL - YELLOW

The baker's sack had a hole in it. Follow the white line on Inglewood street from 7th avenue to 14th avenue: every home it passes is cleared.

16. [A] ALIBIS - GREEN

Every household from 8th avenue to 13th avenue, on Ashbough street, was gathered round one fire or another when it happened - snowed in together, all accounted for.

17. [F] THE FLOUR TRAIL - YELLOW

The baker's sack had a hole in it. Follow the white line on Elderberry street from 8th avenue to 13th avenue: every home it passes is cleared.

18. [F] THE FLOUR TRAIL - YELLOW

Every step on Fireside street from 8th avenue to 13th avenue wears flour like a second snowfall - passed, and therefore innocent.

19. [F] THE FLOUR TRAIL - YELLOW

Flour dusted every doorstep on Goosegate street from 8th avenue to 13th avenue - the killer passed them all, so none of them is the killer.

20. [W] WITNESSES - PURPLE

A watcher on 7th avenue swears no one from Clovepin to Goosegate street so much as opened a door all night.

21. [T] TIMELINES - RED

Count the minutes yourself: for every home from 1st avenue to 5th avenue, on Kindlewood street, the walk through snow this deep is too long. Every one of them is cleared.

22. [W] WITNESSES - PURPLE

The night watchman walked from 12th avenue to 15th avenue, on Lychgate street, and swears every door he passed stayed shut.

23. [F] THE FLOUR TRAIL - YELLOW

Flour dusted every doorstep on Clovepin street from 9th avenue to 12th avenue - the killer passed them all, so none of them is the killer.

24. [F] THE FLOUR TRAIL - YELLOW

The baker's sack had a hole in it. Follow the white line on Dimity street from 9th avenue to 12th avenue: every home it passes is cleared.

25. [A] ALIBIS - GREEN

Not one soul at 8th avenue, from Bellcote to Dimity street, missed widow Gosling's mince pie evening; the whole stretch alibis itself.

26. [A] ALIBIS - GREEN

Every household from 12th avenue to 13th avenue, on Bellcote street, was gathered round one fire or another when it happened - snowed in together, all accounted for.

27. [A] ALIBIS - GREEN

Not one soul at 15th avenue, from Hollins to Inglewood street, missed the crib service; the whole stretch alibis itself.

28. [W] WITNESSES - PURPLE

The verger's terrier, who barks at every snowflake, slept clean through his round from 8th avenue to 9th avenue, on Lychgate street - nobody stirred there.

29. [G] GEOGRAPHY - ORANGE

Whoever did it crossed the frozen millpond; no home from 19th avenue to 20th avenue, on Clovepin street, has a path down to the ice.

30. [F] THE FLOUR TRAIL - YELLOW

Flour dusted every doorstep on Bellcote street from 10th avenue to 11th avenue - the killer passed them all, so none of them is the killer.

31. [F] THE FLOUR TRAIL - YELLOW

The baker's sack had a hole in it. Follow the white line on Lychgate street from 10th avenue to 11th avenue: every home it passes is cleared.

32. [W] WITNESSES - PURPLE

A sleepless neighbor puts the resident of No. 4 Jackfrost street at their own window until dawn.

33. [A] ALIBIS - GREEN

Constable Pellow himself warmed his hands at the hearth of No. 9 Bellcote street until well past the bells.

34. [A] ALIBIS - GREEN

The resident of No. 13 Clovepin street was in plain view of half the village all evening.

35. [G] GEOGRAPHY - ORANGE

The snow on the step of No. 16 Lychgate street lay unbroken all night.

36. [G] GEOGRAPHY - ORANGE

The snow on the step of No. 17 Clovepin street lay unbroken all night.

*When one door remains: hold your finished map at arm's length before you knock.
Mistlecombe has been trying to tell you something all along.*

District checksums

When you believe a district is finished, count the colored homes of each color on that plate. If your counts match, every deduction you made there was sound. If not, a clue was misread - recount before moving on. The killer's own district will always come up one home short of full.

The checksums below - and, at the very bottom, the answer itself - are printed upside down, so honest eyes don't wander. Turn the page when you are ready.

District		Correct counts
District I (Northwest)	7 green, 43 purple, 14 yellow	
District II (Northeast)	20 green, 34 orange, 14 yellow	
District III (Southwest)	18 purple, 6 orange, 26 red, 19 yellow	
District IV (Southeast)	2 green, 4 purple, 34 orange, 10 red, 19 yellow	
No. 18 Clovepin street.		And when one door remains: the killer of Mistlecombe lives at