



ANN TRENEMAN

It's wholly wrong to say a hole is just a hole

[Ann Treneman](#)

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It would have been easy to dismiss the hole by the path as we walked up Lathkill Dale the other day as, well, just another hole in the ground. Thankfully, this hole had its very own sign that declared: “Not just any old hole!” I peered into the hole. Hmmm. It looked wholly like a hole.

Many parts of the Peak District are riddled with holes, ranging from depressions to Alice in Wonderland-style tunnels, thanks to its history of lead mining in the 1800s. Not the case with this one, though. “This hole, and its neighbour to the left, might not look like much but they are in fact the only features of their kind in the UK,” says the sub-heading on the Natural England sign.

It seems that I was looking at a natural sink hole formed as part of an ancient tufa deposit. When it fills during flooding the water does not flow into the Lathkill river but down into an entirely separate channel which runs under the river bed. “The water emerges under pressure through an estavelle (where water sinks under lower flows) downstream.” So never judge

anything, even a hole in the ground, by its appearance. And do
try to work “estovello” into a sentence today.

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Party people

It's day whatever of lockdown and one daughter has had the virus for five days now. She is self-isolating in her bedroom, treating herself with medicinal amounts of moussaka and watching something called *Tiger King*, which is all about crazy Americans (are there any other kind?) involved in underworld big cat breeding. She has started to feel better. My daughters and I check in with each other on the Houseparty app at about 5.30 every evening. This means that we see more of each other than we ever did in normal times. Sometimes, as we play games, shrieking with laughter, it feels like we are having too much fun, regardless of lockdown.

Flower power

The word “essential” has been bugging me all week, ever since Derbyshire police showed a drone photo of a few people and their dog wandering around some empty bit of the Peak District with a label that said: “Not essential.” Well, speak for yourself. I think it is essential to go for a walk daily and, as long as everyone keeps their distance, I don't care where or for how long.

The other thing I think is essential is a garden centre. I am baffled as to why they shouldn't stay open, as long as everyone observes social distancing rules. Come on No 10: open the garden gates asap. We all need to grow something. Never underestimate the power of a flower.

Mouse hunt

The mice are winning, at least that is what I thought when, a few nights ago, I was watching TV and looked down to see (shudder) a dead mouse. It's the fourth dead mouse in the house this week. But are there more mice around or have they just become more visible? I fear it is the latter. Our new kitten Lily-B seems to be a natural killer. This is one of the reasons we got

her but I do wish she could dial down the slaughter at certain times

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yoga during a Zoom class. Truly, this never happened before lockdown.

Viral poetry

Necessity is the mother of invention and so this week's word of the week is "haiflu", as invented by the poet Liv Torc and promoted by the National Poetry Day. These are haikus about the virus which must be, of course, three lines of five, seven, five syllables each. Here's one, credited to Demi Anter, which is illustrated by a photo of a dog looking out a window: "Porridge for the twelfth/ damn day in a row; I am/ now made of porridge."