

**A**t some point, in the dim and distant past, a Zoom was a brand of stripy ice lolly; fashionable in its time, visually pleasing but highly synthetic. Today a Zoom is something totally different, but I think the same description probably applies equally well.

In the past six months my working life, along with that of millions of others, has changed drastically and at its heart are Zoom meetings. At first I wrestled with where to sit and what feature to have in my background; would my wallpaper be a source of hilarity? Would I appear to have a light fitting sprouting from my head? Then I started to embrace the concept and wasn't happy unless there was a Zoom meeting somewhere in the very near future, but now I feel like a child who has consumed one too many Zooms. Just a teensy bit tired of them.

The problem is it's all too easy to say "shall we have a Zoom?" And hey presto – there's yet another virtual meeting in the diary. I'm so busy with Zooms I'm now falling behind on answering my emails – I would never have received this much correspondence if it had to be committed to paper and put in an envelope.

Before I'm deluged with accusations of being a Luddite, I must stress that I love the ease with which we can communicate and "meet" as a group without the hassle and expense of travel. But like emails, which are an amazing tool of ease and convenience, virtual meeting technology

# SHALL WE ZOOM?



Sarah May, Deputy Chief Executive of the IBMS, on the era of virtual meetings and bookshelf snobbery.

can also create its own problems and become a voracious consumer of the time we thought we had liberated.

Virtual meetings are changing how we work at the Institute; there are undoubted savings to be made in both time and money by cutting down on face-to-face meetings. Part of our good corporate governance is looking at ways to make us more efficient and effective for our members, while enabling our Council, advisors, examiners and representatives to combine their voluntary professional work with their paid employment. Our future support from our many volunteers in their various capacities depends on the judicious use of technology whenever possible and wherever appropriate.

To finish on a lighter note, I am sure I am not alone in my fascination for the growing culture of bookshelf snobbery; my attention is repeatedly drawn during television interviews to the contents of the bookshelf behind the interviewee. Well, I'm off to prepare for my next Zoom meeting and I'm debating over whether to position myself strategically with a copy of *Muir's Textbook of Pathology* or see who spots my dog-eared copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*.

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