



'Tis the season

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I find the year as an editor in the world of dentistry has become somewhat cyclical. Every two years in March, for example, I know I have to brush off my best German and make the trip to Cologne – usually via Dusseldorf – for IDS. It signifies the start of what I call ‘conference season one’, lasting through to June.

Once that has wrapped up and summer is finally here, we enter the next cycle – the summer abyss. Offices become thin on the ground as schools break up and families head to Europe for their summer holiday. Out of office replies from colleagues and co-workers, staff in dental practices, spokespeople and key figures increase, and conversations take four to five working days to complete.

We then enter conference season two, and often I feel like I’m living out of a suitcase, playing catch up during the evenings and weekends – when I’m not networking, of course. Finally, we head into the festive season, that comes and goes in the blink of an eye and we’re back to the first of the cycles.

While 2024 is not an IDS year, this March issue still signifies the beginning of

conference season one. Dental Showcase, taking place later this month, is the first real ‘get together’ for the majority of the profession. Shows and exhibitions have changed since I have been in situ – the BDA’s conference in Manchester was always a communal and personal highlight in the calendar, one I vividly recall fondly for the quality of the educational offering available.

Fast forward to 2024, and things are different. COVID-19 taught us overnight how webinars and digital interface could be a more-than-useful way of learning, if a little soulless. Perhaps it’s my two apex predators, but they always seemed keen to join in screentime just as a demonstration was about to begin. Not entirely useful, but cats on camera brought a certain joy to proceedings – in meetings, it still does.

What that traumatic period of our lives taught us was the value of face-to-face interaction, the nuances in reactions in meetings, the visual cues as someone wanted to speak. Those could not be replicated digitally – emojis just doesn’t quite cut it. For some of you, from the moment you enter the exhibition hall, you will bump into someone you know. This is repeated throughout the day, and by the time you’ve caught up with everyone, did you really achieve what you came to do? Probably not, but it’s OK, there’s a second day.

As we build up to the British Dental Conference and Dentistry Show taking place

in May, this issue features some wise thoughts from Shareena Thantrey, Group Marketing Manager at *CloserStill Media*, on these topics – how the profession has changed, how patients have changed, how conferences and exhibitions have changed to meet those needs, and how valuable the price of face-to-face interaction is. The profession is changing and stands at a crossroads. Innovation is outstripping adoption, if my bi-annual trip to IDS has taught me anything, and to meet those challenges shows, exhibitions and conferences will play a significant part in how we absorb different ideas, new innovations being introduced to the profession and the direction of travel you as an individual will want to go.

At both Dental Showcase and the British Dental Conference and Dentistry Show, the *BDJ Portfolio* will be there to support you on your journey, whatever stage of your career. Have an idea you want to share with us? We’re all ears. Do you know a dental student keen to work with *BDJ Student* but isn’t sure where to start? We’ll be there for that, too. Or, if you just want to come and have a chat, pick up copies of the journal and tell us how great we are (to be actively encouraged, ahem), then I’m sure we can find the time for that, too. ‘Tis the season for it, after all. ♦

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