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**WELCOME** to the Winter Edition of the IDSc journal.

In what can only be described as one of the strangest years in the majority of our lifetimes there finally seems to be light at the end of the tunnel. The boffins at Oxford have done us proud and produced a vaccine which will give us a way out of the seemingly never-ending cycle of lockdowns and tiers, not to mention endless experts espousing obvious (at least from a decontamination practitioner’s perspective) advice... Oh, for the days when all we had to comment on was the weather!

Hopefully all of our readers remain safe and well having enjoyed the festive period and are raring to go for what will undoubtedly be a busy year as the NHS tries to regain ground on cancelled operations.

The cancellation of the 2020 conference planned for The Celtic Manor in Newport was without question a huge blow to the IDSc and our supporters. An awful lot of work goes on in the background in relation to the conference and, due to the uncertainty surrounding the

pandemic, planning still had to be done in full knowledge of the likely outcome so our thanks go to our conference committee and sponsors for the professionalism shown in putting the time and effort in.

On a positive note, the Technical certificate has now gained National recognition. This has been a huge effort from all concerned and **Helen Campbell** and her team fully deserve plaudits for this.

One interesting aspect of the pandemic is the expansion of roles for Decontamination Managers now that there is a perceived wider scope for us to cover. For example, I now cover Laundry and Domestic decontamination services, both internal and external as well as Reusable Medical device decontamination, an interesting and often challenging area of work but one that is also very rewarding.

Another issue that has emerged is the fact that, outside of the NHS Cleaning standards, there is no national standard for cleaning protocols. Frankly, this is very troubling. Perhaps if there was, we would be looking at pathogen control in a more preventative way rather than the current reactive format which is in the news on a daily basis. One particularly concerning consequence has been the amount of “Covid-mongers” who have unscrupulously taken advantage of people’s fears in relation to the virus by offering so-called ‘deep cleans’ which, upon further inspection, fall far below the NHS standard.

**Papers:** Our paper, written by **David Stephenson** (Freelance Writer and Consultant Editor) takes a look at the upgraded Centralised Endoscope Decontamination Unit at St Georges Hospital in Tooting, a successful venture and sincere thanks to **Garth Rowbottom** and his team at SSD Ltd for their invaluable input.

**From the archives:** Looks at Part 2 of the piece on Florence Nightingale and her revolutionary research in relation to the issue of Infection prevention (ISSM Journal Sep 2004).

**Something Different:** **Phil Hadridge’s** discussion of insights into virtual video working focuses on remote working and how to get the best out of it.

**Interview With:** Our Interview section is with **Yvonne Winchester**, Head of Services (Decontamination) at the Ulster Hospital in Belfast and a valued member of the IDSc Council.

**IDSc Updates:** Our Technical Director, **Meredith Smart**, is still extremely busy assisting with the testing of Covid 19 samples – the R&D report highlights issues with reprocessing PPE and the transition from MDD to MDR, as always full of interesting facts.

The Technical and Research group are involved in various subjects and in this edition we highlight the support on offer to our members.

Our members far and wide continue working as one in the battle against the many variants of Coronavirus. I’m sure nobody envisaged such a long campaign and we are not out of the woods yet. But, as vital support services we can all be proud of our achievements and the innovation shown in these times of adversity.

As always, I would actively encourage all of our membership to contribute to the journal. As shown in the last two editions contributions were fantastic and certainly made for an interesting read! If you have particular subjects you wish to see covered please let me know. The Technical working group are looking at up and coming R&D across the world of Decontamination, the Education side of things is going from strength to strength and all is very promising for the future of IDSc.

Remember, it’s your Journal and we are all working towards the same goal so let’s make it work for us.

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