

so others have the same problem!



25th April
1664

“Up, and all the morning in my chamber setting some of my private papers in order, for I perceive that now publique business takes up so much of my time that I must get time a-Sundays or a-nights to look after my owne matters.”

Yes, I know the feeling, Mr. Pepys

Well, I have done all I can for tomorrow's important meeting as Patient Representative for the Bristol hospital group. For the most part, I find meetings rather boring and am determined that this meeting, which I shall chair, and which is is 55 minutes – or however long we have at our disposal – will be time well spent. I am as usual over-optimistic about the number of matters that can be fitted in so I have spent as much time thinking of ways of summarizing my remarks as I have with the subject matter itself. The only way I can cope with the ambitious agenda is to see this meeting as the first of many and not a stand-alone one.



Victor Meldrew

My pet hates with meetings is the site of the lecturer and an assistant fiddling around trying to make the projector work, or seeing lots of private material projected from the PC which is just a distraction. I have even seen Skype messages appear at the bottom of the screen while the lecture is in progress. Is it asking too much for people to check their equipment before the audience arrives?

The other irritant, though more minor, is someone asking "can you hear me at the back?" Obviously, if the people at the back cannot hear they could not respond to the question. The better question is, is my diction clear enough and is the volume control adjusted for a full room rather than an empty room. It is part of professionalism to make sure that everything is running properly. Surely, it is not the first time the hall has been used with a microphone.

On the topic of microphones, may I remind organisers that these are instruments that wear like anything else and they need maintenance. How many times have I seen microphones crackle or go on and off because of bad contacts. Sometimes they do not work at all and have to be abandoned. It is up to the manager of the venue to make sure that the equipment is maintained on a regular basis.

So we have to finish this weeding job this morning which will take a good three hours. It is 5° at the moment, but sunny and no threat of rain so it's not all bad.

Later – the second part of the weeding job went much better than the first. Because the client cannot move out of the house unaided I used my galaxy to photograph the garden so she could see what work we have done. She took the opportunity at the end of our working day to tell us about her family; she has 9 great-grandchildren and probably more on the way. She was herself the youngest of 10 children and she said that when she was young, the person first up in the morning got the best clothes. She said her father cooked meals for them all and

they never went short. She has to go to hospital every week for a blood transfusion and then again for an iron transfusion whatever that is. She manages to maintain her stalwart spirit. She goes to a lunch club in Peasedown which she says "gets away from the four walls". She loathes soaps on TV and has never watched one in her life but she complains that her sister is addicted to them and has almost made them a substitute for her real life.

We watched a programme on the life of Albert Einstein. I did not realise the effect of his dominating father, of the rising tide of the German socialist party, and his need to find people would actually believe in some of his theories. National Geographic produced this wonderful ten-part series of which we watched the first one.