

Results of drug tests for CV 19

Some here have questioned what has happened to the UK tests for drugs that might help CV 19 patients.

Reminding you this site does not offer medical advice, I read that the UK trials have produced some good outcomes for the cortico steroid dexamethasone used on some pandemic patients. In the case of patients on ventilators one third benefited from this drug, and for patients given oxygen one fifth compared to patients not given it. Less ill patients did not benefit.

This drug is readily available from a range of manufacturers. It was first produced by Merck but now is widely manufactured around the world. It will be interesting to see what use doctors make of this option in the light of the findings of the trials.

Contentious statues

The statue debate continues, with Prime Ministerial content adding to the coverage. So let me today explore the issues concerning a prominent statue in York. For me it is central that the future of statues is settled by peaceful and democratic means, and not by criminal damage to them. A town or county or nation has to find a way to be at peace with its past so the factions with differing views can accept the decision.

In York near the Minster, with the throne of the Archbishop, rests a modern statue of Emperor Constantine. He has been selected because he spent time in York, and because he converted to Christianity.

There are a number of issues about his life and times which should give us pause before we celebrate his success in promoting Christianity or in uniting his vast empire. He was the Emperor who developed Constantinople as the new centre of the Roman colonial system.

We should ask how acceptable it is that he presided over a system based on slavery. Much of the hard work in building his cities and palaces, in providing for a sybaritic lifestyle for the grandes, and in carrying out the chores of urban living fell to the slaves. Slaves were often badly treated and traded.

We should remember that in York he worked with and through the large army barracks and fortified system, encouraging the army to keep the local population obedient to Roman law. Dissent was dealt with brutally.

We should bear in mind that he led armies against people the Romans called

barbarians because they happened to disagree with Rome and wished to govern themselves, or were settled just beyond the edges of Roman military rule.

He supported a large barrier wall between England and Scotland, with military suppression of any worrying contact between the two places and peoples.

I myself would vote not to have statue to such a man close to one of our great cathedrals were I to have such a vote. It would be better off in a museum to Roman life somewhere. The very least that could be done is to place more explanatory text about this man prominently for all to read if they wish, to explain the good and the bad we now see in him.

There are similar issues with the statue of Trajan by the City of London.

[The shops are opening again](#)

It is welcome news that most shops closed to help arrest the pandemic are to open again today if they wish and if they can do safely.

Many retailers have been inventive in working out how to allow people into shops to see the stock, to choose and to buy whilst observing the rules of social distancing. The food stores pioneered techniques including asking people to wait outside, limiting the numbers in the shop at any time, going round the store in a prescribed way, keeping your distance when waiting to pay and protecting staff with screens and protective clothing. It helps if customers wear some facial covering. These and other ideas will now be adapted by the non food retailers who start trading again today.

I trust people will welcome this relaxation and will want to go and buy things from the shops. Many people say they value their local High Street and want the shops there to be available for them. To help secure their future it is important to back them in the only way that counts in the next few weeks, by visiting them and buying things from them. Of course if you are vulnerable or have to self isolate different considerations come into play, but for most people the risks of shopping for non food should be no bigger than the risks we have been taking to shop for food in recent weeks.

I have argued throughout this crisis so far that government needs to give the highest priority to saving lives, but also has to follow policies that can save livelihoods. I was pleased the government took up the idea of government cash to support staff who could not go to work, but this cannot go indefinitely. The only way to pay the wages in the months ahead is for people to be back at work serving and supplying customers who will pay the bills.

High Streets were struggling a bit against the formidable competitive challenge of on line shopping before the pandemic hit. It has now got a lot tougher, with almost three months of no trading from shops whilst people

switch to the internet offer. That is why if we want to help restore our High Streets we need to support our favourite retailers as they go to the cost and trouble of adapting to the new conditions and opening their stores today.

Hold firm in trade talks

The PM should give no ground in talks next week. We need to take full control of our fish, our laws and our borders on January 1 2021.

Nor do we need to delay bringing in checks at our borders on EU food and goods. They should be the same as the checks we currently apply to non EU food and goods. If it needs more people and more checking lanes at ports then there is six months to increase capacity to do it properly with no added delays. We can also use trusted trader arrangements so most of it is pre checked, not needing a border post check. If we know what is on the truck and can spot check or follow up leads if wrongful declarations are ever suspected we can allow easy transit for most goods.

How many more times do we have to explain this to a reluctant Establishment? Ministers must instruct them to do it. It's what we already do for other countries so why the fuss? People importing food are anyway responsible in law for checking a consignment when they receive it, as it is their reputation on the line. They want compliant and wholesome food, so they do most of the checking and enforcing well away from the ports.

Latest survey shows further decline in CV 19 cases

I am glad the government started to test a sample of the population and to re test regularly to construct a time series of the incidence of the disease.

The latest figures for the period 25 May to 7 June show the figure down to just 11 people having a positive test out of the 19,933 people in the sample or 0.06%. These tests exclude hospitals and care homes to capture the position in households.

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