

## **Thinking about Thought for the Day**

### ***Thought for the Day***

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It is seventy years to the day since the first ever Thought for the Day was broadcast on BBC radio. Britain was at war, Europe was in flames, and austerity had set in: young men were again being given little option about fighting for their country, and young women were taking their places in trades and professions that had previously been closed to them.

The world looked different too – aside from the ebb and flow of European borders that were both the cause and the effect of the War, India was a British colony and Pakistan did not yet exist; the British mandate in Palestine had not yet given birth to Israel and Jordan; Iran remained part of Iraq, and Lebanon of Syria.

By the Law of Unintended Consequences, both social and political revolutions had begun!

Very little is known about that first broadcast other than that it came from Scotland, but was broadcast to the entire United Kingdom. This – and a daily keep-fit programme – was Scotland's gift to the nation!

It is ironic that at this anniversary, Thought for the Day has come under scrutiny on the grounds that it discriminates against non-religious content, so it may be worth thinking about its purpose.

I am proud to have been one of the small group that proposed that the Scottish Parliament should have Time for Reflection where Westminster has Prayers. I remember comparing it to Thought for the Day – an opportunity to set the political ding-dong aside and reflect on something spiritual rather than temporal. It should be a time for intellectual challenge, often based on a thought-provoking religious text, not for political or religious point-scoring.

The one thing we can be sure of about that first Thought for the Day exactly 70 years ago is that the message was a Christian one. Obviously, that has changed over the years and many different faiths are now represented – otherwise I would not be talking to you today!

So I invite you to join me in celebrating 70 years of Thought for the Day, both for its inclusiveness and for its continuity.

Many Happy Returns!

*Ephraim Borowski*

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