

Tony Thinking Aloud lxxv

Monday was the first National Health Service, Social Care and Front Line Workers Day – the anniversary of the beginning of the National Health Service on July 5th 1948 and on this day this year the NHS was awarded the George Cross.

We do not all understand about life before the NHS, but many will have memories of those times and the difference it made. My Grandmother needed an operation before the war, and this clearly used most of the savings. Some ten or so years after, my grandfather held back from going into hospital because of the cost I guess, he did not get treatment in time!

Sometimes we may forget the significance of the local Cottage Hospital in over 100 years' service to the community. It was supported by the local community at a time when there was no NHS.

As Chaplain, I took Holy Communion every Thursday. I remember on one anniversary of the NHS, probably the 50th, I was invited to a 1948 lunch – we had sausages, lots of mash and a milk pudding!

After a considerable campaign by the whole village over a number of years, when the Cottage Hospital had to be replaced, the Cottage Wing was provided.

I want to share with you words from the the 70th Anniversary sermon of the NHS given by the Bishop of London, who was herself at one time a nurse.

'The National Health Service (NHS) was born out of the vision of healthcare to all, regardless of wealth or status. It was born out of belief in the common good.

Before the founding of the NHS, those without means didn't dare call a doctor for fear of the bill that would land on the doormat. They couldn't afford to go to hospital, so they went to the workhouse to receive basic medical care. Without

the NHS, the poor were left to fend for themselves at their times of direst need, relying on home cures for illness or diseases.

Today we celebrate and give thanks for the courage and passion of the politicians who made the NHS a reality. It did not have an easy passage through Parliament. We celebrate and give thanks for those who continue that vision in today's NHS, despite the growing pressures on them. We say thank you to all the nurses and doctors who continue to provide care for us today.

We give thanks to God for our NHS and pray that it continues to serve all who need it with humanity, dignity and compassion.