

BBC RADIO ULSTER

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Friday 16th May 2014

I'm not very good at complaining. Maybe I'm typical of people from this part of the world, but service has to be exceptionally bad before I would risk the embarrassment of making a scene. I recently found myself sitting in the back row of a plane on a flight in America. The cabin crew ran out of food before they reached the last few rows twice during the flight. The first time the passengers were slightly miffed but when it happened for a second time I was amazed at the different responses of the passengers. While I was happy enough with an apology, a claim form and a packet of crisps, an American woman in the row in front stood up and demanded to speak to the captain! I know it was poor service but personally I would rather the pilot concentrated on landing the plane than on rustling up a limp chicken Panini in the cockpit!

It's incredibly inspirational when people who have something serious to complain about rise above their tragic circumstances and live their lives to the full instead. Stephen Sutton was a true inspiration. When he was diagnosed with terminal cancer, rather than dwell on his misfortune the teenager drew up a bucket list of things he wanted to achieve before he died. This included skydiving, playing drums in front of 90,000 people at Wembley, hugging an elephant and getting a tattoo. The teenager became an inspiration to millions of people when he dedicated his final days to raising more than £3m for the Teenage Cancer Trust. When Stephen tragically died this week his mother described him as her courageous, selfless, inspirational son.

In the past week the people in this place were unusually united in paying our respects to Oscar Knox, the remarkable, courageous and inspirational little boy who fought cancer and captured our hearts. On Sunday night Belfast City Hall was lit up in the blue and yellow colours of

Team Oscar and the night sky over the city was speckled with lights of hundreds of lanterns released as a symbol of love and respect for 'Wee' Oscar.

A look at any lamppost will remind you that there's an election this month. In every election political parties present their manifestos to the people. Sometimes they tell us they will cut taxes by this percent or increase public spending by that percent. But when I think about these truly inspirational young people I feel challenged to come up with a personal manifesto. To cut my complaining by at least 50% and to increase my thankfulness and count my blessings by at least 50%. To live life to the full every day, to never, ever give up, to fight to the very end and to value every precious moment as a gift from God.