Talking Tees Valley Activity Pack

Valentines

Tees Valley Museums

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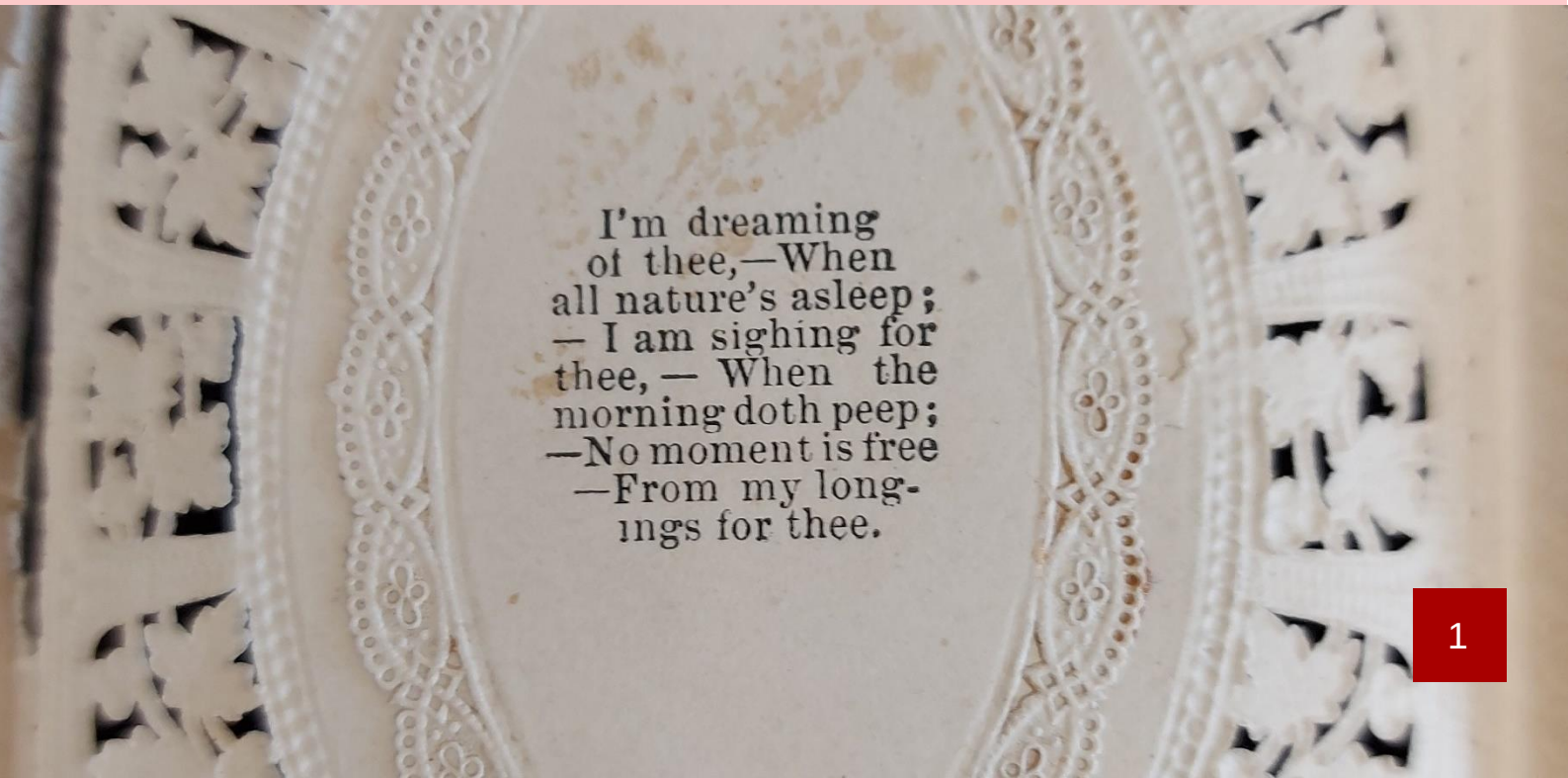
Tees Valley Museums

Welcome to another edition of the Talking Tees Valley Activity Pack

Each month we will use objects from one of our museums in the Tees Valley to take a closer look at the lives and stories from people in our area.

In this month's newsletter we are looking at Valentine's day. We celebrate Valentine's Day on February 14th every year. It's a chance to indulge in all things we associate with romance like flowers, chocolates, and cards. Many people take the chance to ask out those they fancy on Valentines as it's a more acceptable time of year to be daring!

But where did these traditions come from? Why do we associate love hearts, love letters and cards with February 14th? Why do we give potential lovers and partners gifts of flowers and chocolates as a sign of our affection? We will explore all these things in this edition!



Valentine's Day has its roots in ancient Rome when the festival of Lupercalia was held every February. This was a celebration of Springtime and fertility and one of the popular activities was the pairing up of men and women through a lottery.

Later, when Christianity arrived, the February festival was rebranded as Valentine's Day. Named after St Valentine, a Christian martyr who was imprisoned in ancient Rome for his beliefs and was said to have written a love letter to his jailor's daughter, signing it 'from your valentine'.

Valentines Cards

Valentines' cards became popular in the late 1700s. They were handmade with painted and drawn decorations and sweet messages written on. The earliest Valentine card that still survives dates from 1795 and is now kept in York Castle Museum

Victorian Valentines cards were usually made of paper lace in various colours, with printed verses or poems on the front. They included images of small cherubs and cupids, hearts, and silk trims with wax flowers.

By the early 1800s, developments in new printing methods meant they were easy and cheap to mass produce.

Did you know...

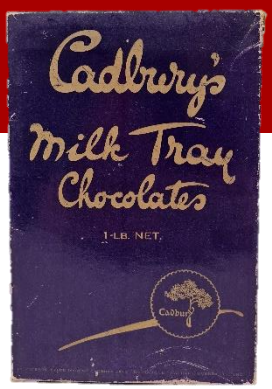
It is thought that in 1820 around 200,000 cards were bought and sent in the Borough of London alone and by 1840 this number had doubled.

Have you ever sent a Valentine's Day card?

Or maybe you have received one? If so, what was it like – did it have cherubs and love hearts on it?

If you could write a secret message in your valentine's day card what would it say? Hush keep it to yourself!

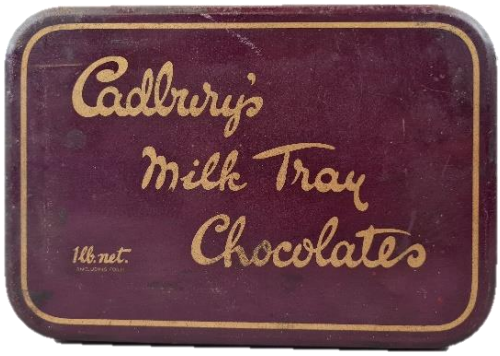
Chocolate



The giving of chocolate boxes on Valentines began in 1861 when Richard Cadbury created ‘eating chocolate’ as a by-product of drinking chocolate. He placed these small chocolates in painted and decorated wooden boxes. The boxes were given as gifts of love and because of their quality were kept as sewing or button boxes.

Did you know…

Cadbury created the first box of chocolates in the shape of a heart in 1868 establishing a new Valentines tradition.



The Language of Love

Floriography, more commonly known as the language of flowers, became popular in the Victorian era. Flowers had their own special meaning and could be used by lovers to speak a ‘secrete language’.

Below we have included a quick guide to what different flowers mean. Next time you send or receive flowers use the guide to tell someone a message in the language of flowers!

Flowers	Meaning
Poppy	‘I am not free’
White Lily	‘My love is pure’
Iris	‘I send a message’
Hyacinth	‘Your loveliness charms me’
White Rose	‘I cannot’
Daisy	‘I love you truly’
Red Carnation	‘My heart aches for you’
Honeysuckle	‘Devoted affection’
Yellow Pansy	‘Thinking of you’
Canterbury Bell	‘Your letter received’
Red Tulip	‘I declare my love’
Apple Blossom	‘I prefer you above all’
Anemone	‘Forsaken’

Is your favourite flower on our list? If so, what does it mean in the language of flowers?

Valentine Poems

Love poems and small verses became a popular addition to many Valentine's day cards and letters. Here we have a few that appear on some of the cards in our collections.

Just as the sun is wont to shed,
On earth, at noon, his gladdening ray,
So, when my heart was cold and dead,
There fell they radiance on my way.
Now know I neither care nor strife:
Thou art my own, my love, my life.

You have my prayer, and earnest wishes,
That joy and peace, be your lot,
And I return, I claim, my dearest.
That these few words be not forgot.

My greetings speeds to you today,
To tell you all my heart would say,
Of true love, dear,
And deep devotion.
Deeper than farthest depth of ocean.

Forget me not –
Oh! It is sweet,
Tis passing sweet,
Though in a distant spot,
To know that till again we meet,
Thou dost forget me not.

Did you know?

The famous Roses are Red, Violets are Blue poem can be traced back to 1590 and Edmund Spenser's poem 'The Faerie Queene'.

'It was upon a Sommers shynie day,
When Titan faire his beames did display,
In a fresh fountaine, farre from all mens vew,
She bath'd her brest, the boyling heat t'allay;
She bath'd with **roses red, and violets blew,**
And all the sweetest flowres, that in the forrest grew.'

Why not try your hand at a Roses are Red and Violets are Blue poem?
Or have ago at writing a love poem?

Valentines

A	I	L	A	C	R	E	P	U	L	S	L	O	E
V	F	L	V	I	O	L	E	T	D	I	T	I	B
A	L	B	B	D	I	P	E	R	O	B	E	N	M
L	O	O	H	T	R	U	A	R	R	L	W	F	A
E	W	F	P	D	N	C	S	H	A	C	U	C	R
N	E	T	L	C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E	S
T	R	T	M	N	D	E	C	U	O	R	C	A	E
I	S	E	O	E	E	R	S	R	P	R	N	L	T
N	A	P	O	E	M	S	E	O	L	I	L	E	U
E	Y	R	A	U	R	B	E	F	R	S	D	E	S
S	T	O	N	L	O	V	E	Y	R	P	Y	O	I
I	Y	I	R	N	Y	R	U	B	D	A	C	L	R
I	S	L	F	O	R	G	E	T	M	E	N	O	T
N	E	N	C	H	E	R	U	B	S	U	L	I	E

CUPID
FLOWERS
CHOCOLATES
CHERUBS
FORGET ME NOT
POEMS
CARDS
FEBRUARY
LOVE
CADBURY
ROSE
VALENTINES
VIOLET
LUPERCALIA

Please feel free to share your feedback with us at Teesvalleymuseums@stockton.gov.uk

Images used in this newsletter are courtesy of Hartlepool Museum Service and Preston Park Museum and Grounds.