

# Podcast Script (1)

- For centuries, the world has celebrated a day dedicated to love. One which has been mostly associated with Cupid, the God of desire, attraction and affection. Valentines Day and it all started in Ancient Rome.
- At time when Emperor Claudius 'the Cruel' ruled over the Roman Empire, a man named Valentinus, fell in love with a girl named Julia. He had been jailed for his radical religious beliefs that disobeyed Claudius's notion of the being 12 Gods.
- After being recognised for how educated he was, a jailer brought his daughter to him to be taught. He taught her history, arithmetic and what he knew and understood of God. It was to Julia that he wrote "From Your Valentine" on the day of his death. As a token of her love and friendship, it is thought to have been her who planted a pink blossom almond tree near his grave.



# Podcast Script (2)

- It is this very story that has brought people to use the 14<sup>th</sup> of February (Valentinus' death) to express their affection towards their loved one.
- An alternate story however sees Valentinus aiding Christians to flee from Rome to escape Claudius' wrath. He was punished severely and as a consequence, he was forced to renounce his faith and then killed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 273 AD.
- Here in Britain, we have our own Valentines Day story and it is very different to the one of Ancient Rome. The 14<sup>th</sup> of February was said to mark the beginning of birds mating season which brought about the idea of romance being the central focus.



# Podcast Script (3)

- Women believed they would marry the first man they saw on Valentines Day within a year. Shakespeare brings attention to this in Hamlet where he writes:

“Good morrow! ‘Tis St. Valentine’s Day, All in the morning betime, And I a maid at you window, to be your valentine.”

- Some women even took to leaving bay leaves on their pillows to induce dreams of their future love.
- It’s not just the likes of Shakespeare that took to writing about Valentines Day. Charles, Duke of Orleans wrote the first known British Valentines Day poem to his wife whilst he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following the Battle of Agincourt. This poem is now kept safe in the British Library.



# Podcast Script (4)

- In Norfolk, a man name Jack Valentine was taken as a 'Father Christmas' figure. He was believed to leave candies and gifts in houses for children on doorsteps. Strangers would take to doing just this. 1872 saw a decline in this tradition as people started sending letters and cards due to a Post Office ruling of parcels under 12 ounces could be posted through the letter box. However, the first Valentines card to ever be sent was long before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Norfolk 1477 the first recorded card was between a John Paston and Margery Brew. Parchment was very expensive and literacy was low and so it was difficult to have the tradition of card sending before this. But fast forward 395 years and over 150,000 letters were sent just from Norwich. From here, the Print Revolution enabled factory-produced cards to be made on a large scale.

# Podcast Script (5)

- Valentine's Cards from the Victorian era were very ornate. They could be made out of lace paper, velvet and satin ribbons and often they had secret panels that held private messages.
- At this time, it was tradition for only men to send such cards as it allowed them to keep up with the strict rules they set to ban their daughters from receiving any sort of correspondence...unless it had been read first by their parents.
- Back in Saxon England, we find the belief of boys presenting girls tokens of their affection to be the origin of this tradition. It was common to be given gloves as it was a sign of dominance as well as affection.



# Podcast Script (6)

- Even as early as the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, Pope Gelasius took to a less extreme version of the Roman Festival, Lupercalia in which young men and women were randomly matched in the hope that they would marry and women would be hit by animal hides in order to encourage fertility. This was then tied in to the celebration of St Valentine. Simultaneously, the Normans celebrated Galatin's Day: a day which devoted to the appreciation of women which could have been incorporated into Valentines Day.

