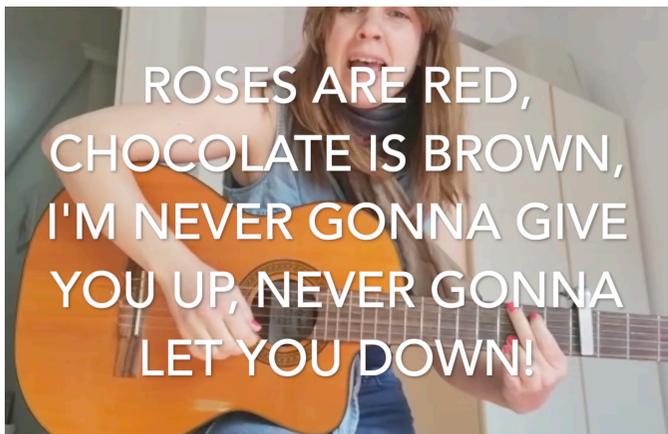


# WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

## Do You Think That Romance Is Dead?

18/02/21 / **Keyword: romance**

ECP Coach John talks about romance, the role that St. Valentine's Day has played throughout history and answers the question, are the British really so cold and unromantic?

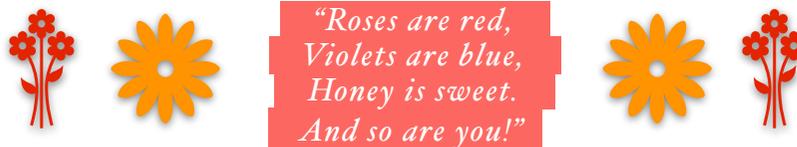


Last Sunday was Saint Valentine's Day, an event that provokes strongly contrasting opinions. We've all heard the unfavourable, stereotypical comparison between the supposedly hot and romantic Latin lovers and the cold, unfeeling British. But how true is this? A look at the way Valentine's Day is celebrated in the UK may make you think again.

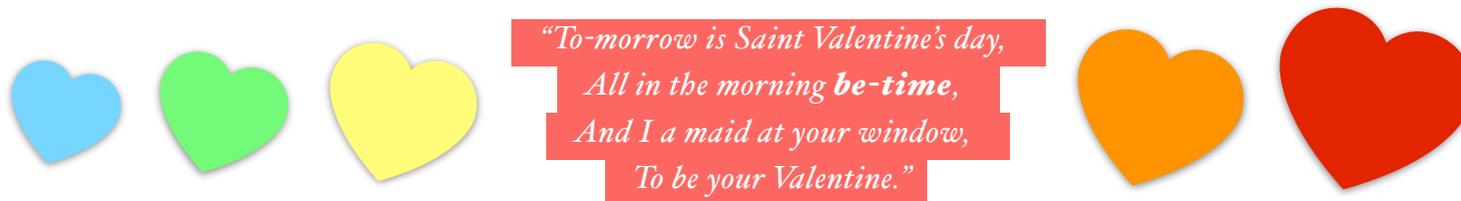
My experience of Valentine's Day here in the Basque Country is that it is basically a Corte Ingles consumer 'fiesta' for already existing couples who exchange gifts and maybe go for dinner. Meanwhile, in the UK it is much more romantic and is focused on single people looking for love.

On Valentine's Day, you are allowed to declare your love for that special someone you have **fancied** for a while, but were perhaps too shy to tell them. Confessions of love can be seen in British newspapers, local magazines and on Facebook.

The traditional way is to send an anonymous, unsigned card with a verse and clue about who the sender is. Here is a typical, **cheesy** example:



By 1601, St. Valentine's Day appears to have become an established part of English tradition, as William Shakespeare mentions it in Ophelia's **lament** in his play, Hamlet:



The anonymity aspect of being able to send your Valentines's Day cards was responsible for introducing **daring** and **racy** verse to the otherwise **prudish** Victorians. Today, Valentine's Day verses are often **saucy**, and cynical too. *Turn to page 2*

## Useful vocabulary

**to fancy:** to like someone in a sexual, romantic way

**cheesy:** cheap and of low quality or poor taste

**lament:** an expression of grief or sorrow

**be-time:** in good time (Old English)

**daring:** adventurous, audacious

**racy:** exciting and slightly sexual

**prudish:** easily shocked or offended by sexual matters

**saucy:** cheeky and impertinent

**tenderness:** affection, gentleness and kindness

## Let's chat about that!

1. According to 'Valentine's Day Facts' (page 2) what is the origin of the festival?
2. What are the differences between SVD here and the UK?
3. Have you ever sent an anonymous Valentine's card or flowers?
4. What are your favourite romantic songs?
5. Did you celebrate Valentine's Day this year?
6. Finish the poem: "Roses are red, Violets are blue....."

# LIVE!English Events

Come and socialise in English!

## Coffee Saturdays

1st Saturday 11:00

~~3rd Oct~~

~~7th Nov~~

~~5th Dec~~

~~9th Jan~~

~~6th Feb~~

**6th Mar**

Not in April

8th May

5th Jun

## Cinema Nights

Last Friday 19:30

~~30th Oct~~

~~27th Nov~~

~~Not in Dec~~

~~29th Jan~~

**26th Feb**

26th Mar

30th April

28th May

25th Jun



"Roses are red,  
Violets are blue,  
But I wouldn't know that,  
Because you never bring me flowers.  
You bastard!"

Flowers are also a must-have gift for Valentine's Day; a symbol of sympathy, **tenderness** and love.

The commercial aspect of the celebrations increases every year, with gifts of chocolates, flowers and even jewellery now being expected to accompany the simple St. Valentine's Day card.

However, Valentine's Day can be traumatic, especially for teenagers. I well remember going to school on 14th February and being asked, "How many cards did you get?" Not getting any would make you feel unloved and worthless.

In these difficult pandemic times, when people are separated, it is best not to be too cynical about St. Valentine's Day. I leave the final word to Erich Fromm who was featured in a previous [WEP](#).

*"If two people who have been strangers, as all of us are, suddenly let the wall between them break down, and feel close, feel one, this moment of oneness is one of the most exhilarating, most exciting experiences in life."*

**LONG LIVE ST. VALENTINE'S DAY!**

Written by ECP coach John Hird

## Valentine's Day Facts

Valentine's Day is celebrated in the memory of Saint Valentine, the Christian martyr who gave his life in the honour of love. King Claudius decapitated Saint Valentine in 269 A.D. for performing illegal marriages of Roman soldiers, who were barred from marrying.

**Pre-Christian pagans had celebrated the onset of spring, in mid-February. This time was considered the best for marriages.**

In the US, approximately 190 million Valentine cards are now sent each year; worldwide the figure is estimated to be closer to 1 billion.

**Today, almost half the UK population spend somewhere in the region of £1.3 billion each year on their very own special Valentine!**

27.6 American households gave Valentine's Day presents to their pet dogs last year, and more than 17.1 million picked up gifts for their cats. All in all, Americans spend an estimated \$751.3 million on gifts for their pets on Valentine's Day.

## Want to be romantic? Play this playlist!

My Funny Valentine - Chet Baker

Tupelo Honey - Reina del Cid

More than this - Roxy Music

Valentine's Day is Over - Billy Bragg

I want you - Bob Dylan

This is love - PJ Harvey

Friday I'm in love - The Cure