

Tony Thinking Aloud xciii

Have you sent one (or perhaps more) of the 145 million Valentine Cards which will be sent this year? Cards may be relatively new, but Valentine greetings can be traced back centuries. Geoffrey Chaucer made reference in a poem of 1375.

It is widely believed that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of the death of Valentine in around 270 AD. He was almost certainly martyred, and some say the background is this... Emperor Claudius believed single men made better soldiers. He outlawed marriage of young men. Valentine realised this injustice, defied Claudius, and continued to perform marriages of young lovers in secret. He was martyred when his actions were discovered. There are other stories about him too. The date in the middle of February was near the pagan festival of Lupercalia, a fertility festival. It is often related to the fact that it is the day birds are said to start mating!

So today – a religious background, a day to express friendship and perhaps go further, exchange gifts, and of cards traditionally without the name of the sender. In places such as Barton, a church service relating to married couples, or those planning weddings.

It is good for the commercial world, cards, gifts, celebratory meals...

All about relationships – good happy relationships, which have been in the thought of many during the past two years.

Enjoy Saint Valentine's Day. It has come to mean more to folk over recent years, that cannot but be a good thing. I would not think most grandparents to those of my age would have thought much about it.