



Birmingham is the living heart of this fine country of ours, it's our duty to show our soft underbellies. As Area magazine's resident Sex Priest and Chief Consultant in all matters Romance it was natural I would be asked to write a few words for Valentines Day. So if you're bored of the usual bunch of flowers and expensive card, here are some of my suggestions for things to do for your girlfriend this February:

Go to the flower wholesale market and buy one metric tonne of roses, which you then shovel onto her sleeping body – the subtext being "I'm drowning in your love".

The Canalside café is an adorable little ramshackle cottage of rustic niceness near the Gas Street Basin, take your girl here and share a bowl of chilli under the fairy lights on mismatched furniture and soon you'll be both making plans to roam around the country rescuing puppies living on a canal boat fuelled by cuddles.

Challenge a stranger to a duel for some perceived slight against your lady friend's honour, I'm pretty sure girls love historical things and men fighting over them.

Draw, write and publish a magazine all about her. There are a range of print on demand services out there on the wild plains of the internet and it shouldn't be too hard to knock together 44 incessant pages banging on about how lovely she is, culminating in a 12 page spread about how her bum smells of flowers and her hair looks like clouds.

Two words: home-made tattoo.

A guest suggestion from local graffiti artist Seeds The Macdonald's at the end of Digbeth, has a stunning view of the city at sunrise. Bring a champagne breakfast. The best

place to sit is on the bench outside, conveniently enough someone has written 'Seeds' on it.

Go to one of Birmingham's numerous cocktail bars (I would recommend cool cat hangout The Victoria), and get one of the friendly bar staff to make a cocktail and name it after her. However because all the good combinations of drinks have already been discovered your newly christened 'Pretty Face Girlfriend' will probably consist of Adovka, Jagermeister and coffee grounds.

Secretly film you both having sex a couple times and edit it together into a tasteful montage to her favourite song – don't forget the hilarious 'blooper reel'.

Go through her bins, and turn up with a hamper of things you know she has just run out of.

Arrange an elaborate wedding between your pets - I'm not sure you're allowed to book Birmingham Cathedral. To be honest last time I took some animals in there lots of people started shouting some very unchristian words at me.

St Valentine is the safe Christian veneer the church applied to a Roman Sex festival sprinkled with capitalism. We at AREA say Celebrate love everyday and never buy your girlfriend a card you could make yourself.