

Well, folks, after ranting on about this, that and the next thing for over three years now, we seem to have run out of steam so this, believe it or not, will be our last ever rant.

This, though, is a sombre rant – the demise of the high street florist. High Street floristry, whatever that is, might survive in well-heeled city areas but, while Biggar shops may well be okay, other shopping areas are not doing so well and the days of the florist shops may well be limited. Who knows?

Today, many florists are working from home or from garden workshops or units, collecting orders through web-sites and other social media environments, contactable by mobile phone or email or faceless contact forms. Landlines are old hat and even web-site presence may soon be ‘passé’.

Last year, when we were talking to a major Dutch wholesaler, we put it to them that the florist shop in the High Street was becoming a thing of the past. ‘Oh no, that’s not true,’ their representative argued. Sorry, it is. The habit of going into a flower shop and enjoying the scent, the presentation and benefitting from the expertise of the florist may well die out altogether within the next few years. Today’s flower world is all about ‘events floristry’ – weddings and other functions – so that’s fast flowers that look good for the occasion, but are really not intended to last – flowers that have maybe only a maximum of a week’s life in them.

There’s no doubt flowers have gone up in price as a result of what’s happening at present and, while the large retails may be able to absorb these increased costs (and they clearly can – we check supermarket prices and designs regularly) there’s bound to come a time when they too put prices up.

Most notably, lily prices are high at the moment and Christmas bulbs and other arrangements are costing more than they did last year. In fact, Dutch Flower Auction House reports a 15% rise for UK sales week ending 21 October. For further proof, look at the number of vans at the market which actually bear an actual address as opposed to a virtual environment. We’re not complaining, just trying to be realistic about the future of the high street florist.

And for anyone considering changing career and joining the ‘glamorous’ world of floristry, the reality is cold days, lifting heavy boxes, washing out buckets, sorting and clearing flowers, stock control... and that’s before you even think about selling a flower or creating someone’s dream display for the Christmas tale, never mind trying to look glamorous yourself!

Despite this last tale of doom and gloom, be assured that we’re ensconced here as a high street florist for the foreseeable future. We haven’t really gone down the social media route – simply because we like meeting people and talking through the order. We supposed that’s old-fashioned in today’s depersonalised world, but we’d worry about orders being lost in cyber space. We can manage to confuse ourselves, thank you, without adding in any technological complication and all it takes is a major clean-up of the back shop to solve the problem – our happy helpers are constantly advising this anyway

We’ve really enjoyed sounding off for the last few years but, as we said at the start, it’s time to bid a fond farewell to this section of the website. We’ll continue with an online presence so we can update you on seasonal tips through the website and add photos which we think might

be of interest, but at heart we'll continue to see ourselves as a high street shop as long as we possibly can.

For now, we're looking forward to our happy band of local helpers in their Christmas outfits joining us in the shop to help ensure your festive wishes are granted. Every year we say this, but we do all really look forward to seeing you at some point over the Christmas period in our wee shop at the top of the town.

Ranting over! Thank you so much.