

Chit chat from the shop

Love is in the air...

Love was certainly in the Biggar air when I joined the cheery team of helpers at Rowan Design on 14 February as one of Cupid's couriers that day.

The shop was already buzzing when I arrived at quarter to nine: the phone was ringing ('a single red rose in a black envelope – yes I can do that', 'a pretty basket for a young girl – no problem'), the door bell was jangling ('something really extravagant – can you give me five minutes?') and the back shop was filled to the gunnels with bouquets and baskets, made up the night before or earlier that morning.

Deliveries were on one side and 'to collect' on the other. Attached to each was a yellow post-it indicating when the flowers were to be delivered ('early', 'before 9.45', 'between 11.30 and 12.00', 'after 2pm' etc. - other delivery firms take note!) or with directions for the delivery 'girls': 'upper flat big white house'.

Introductions over, Rosie sent us on our way but wait... 'You'll need the map.'

'What? I've lived in Biggar for 18 years – I don't need a map.' Famous last words...

Then my delivery partner mentioned a new dog. All thoughts of flowers and deliveries went out the window as shared doggy photos for a minute of two but the 'boss' brought us back to reality, 'Girls, remember that one's due before 9.30!'

Off we set on our first mission, with a single red rose expressing the same tender feelings as the extravagant bouquet for our second recipient. Some on the receiving end were surprised, some delighted, others (including the neighbours!) plainly relieved. Back and forth we went for most of the morning, criss-crossing Biggar and doubling back on ourselves, over and over, to ensure delivery at the appointed time.

The shop was still going like a fair, but our mission was complete by mid-afternoon and, my job done, I headed home - with my very own token of love from someone I know I've never even met – but that's a story for another time...

Love was still in the air last Saturday when I was back with the cheery team taking flowers to some much-loved mums around the Biggar area. Gone were the seductive reds and blacks from Valentine's Day and in were gentle yellows and pastel pinks, lilacs and blues, and white. Order notes indicated which should have lilies and which no lilies, who'd asked for cottage garden bouquets or pretty baskets or spring bulbs in containers and the post-it notes were attached as before, from she who must be obeyed. Some made us wonder - 'Don't leave with the neighbours!' (what's the story there then?) and others made us laugh - 'Delicate flowers – do not cuddle'.

This time we could have done with the map we'd sniffed at the month before, and a combination of house numbers, no name plates and only first names on Rosie's notes so completely flummoxed us at one point that we almost committed the cardinal sin of delivering to the wrong house. Only the mail behind the door alerted us to the potential for error and, just in time, the flowers were delivered to the rightful recipient. Of course, had we

correctly interpreted Rosie's cryptic hand, we'd have been okay, but then what would you make of 'First past road 'X' stick on indicators early drive up watch out for ...'?

Midway through our task, Rosie rewarded us with lunch and we sat in the back shop hugging our mugs of soup as if our lives depended on it – and we genuinely felt they did. My partner in crime was claiming the onset of confusion associated with hypothermia and my middle-aged joints were starting to seize up, for I was sure that the ambient temperature in Rowan Design which keeps those flowers looking as fresh as the day they were picked must defy minimum working conditions for most people!

It wasn't forever though - the Mother's Day mission was completed, as before, by mid-afternoon which meant we could leave Rosie to her igloo and I headed off for a warm bath and an evening by a cosy fire.

Looking forward to Easter...