MULTILINGUAL MILKMAN!

Posted on July 12, 2010 by Eddie

Category: Language Learning

I love this story from the BBC:

> *"Cemcho bhai, harisani, ano chokra kabar?"*
>
> *That is Gujarati for: "Hello brother, how are you? Any news about your son?"*
>
> *Not too unusual as the start of a conversation in the heart of the Asian community in Blackburn, apart from the fact that the words are being spoken by a 69-year-old white, English-born milkman.*
>
> *John Mather, aka Jimmy, has been doing the rounds in this north-west town for the past 50 years. And as he has gone from door-to-door in the town's large Asian community, he has become almost fluent in Gujarati.*

The idea of the milkman learning Gujarati (and Bengali) is a great one, but the bit I really like in the story comes further down:

> *"I think my Gujarati is alright," he says. "It gets me by. I've made friends with it and that's the most important thing. I've also had loads of wedding invitations (from the Asian community).*

Language is not primarily about communication, it is about relationships. He learned Gujarati and he made friends. Great stuff!