

Walking the streets of Tyldesley for twenty years

By Philip Catherall

I have now reached the milestone of 20 years service as a Royal Mail postman. There have been many changes that I have encountered over the years. I have seen many people come and go from the delivery office at Tyldesley, very few remain from the ones I first encountered 20 years ago. The whole structure of the job has been radically altered, for example, two deliveries a day changed to one big one. Cycles replaced by vans and trolley's. Even the name of Royal Mail was changed to Consignia and then quickly changed back again. The geography of Tyldesley has changed over the years, as more streets and houses have been built. We now have a busway running through Tyldesley, which has dramatically changed the landscape. And just looking at how Elliott Street has changed, with new businesses replacing the old.

Some things haven't changed. dogs and low letterboxes are still a challenge, even for the twenty-first century postman.

One thing that has dramatically changed is the arrival of internet shopping, which has increased, exponentially, the volume of parcels which we handle. One time, you had to be willing to wait a whole month for a parcel to arrive, now we expect the item the very next day (or sooner!!!). We have become very impatient.

In my own personal life things have also changed. When I started Royal Mail, I never envisaged that I would be walking around the country, totting up over 2 and a half thousand miles and the wonderful experiences that have gone with it.

I can't say that everything has been wonderful. The last 20 years have been quite turbulent on a personal level. I have had a lot of soul-searching. If there is one thing I know, it is how little I know about the world, the future and other people. I'm still learning things about myself, some good, some not so good. Like I said before, we have become very impatient. Our relationships don't come ready wrapped and waiting at the doorstep the moment we get home. They have to be worked on (by both people). How much damage can be caused because of our selfishness and impatience, as the last month has proven to me. What happened to me, did break me, but I do believe that God can, and is healing me. Alright, in the end I lost. But thanks be to God, I have also gained. I have gained a better understanding of myself, that I have certain qualities to take into any future relationship that I encounter, for example, patience, resilience, endurance, self-control, long-suffering and faith in the goodness and righteousness of God.

A Prayer

Heavenly Father, I pray for the hard-hearted, that you will give them hearts of flesh. I pray for the broken hearted, that you will bring healing. I pray for our impatience, with you and each other, help us to realize that you and you alone know the future and that all things work together for good for those who trust and love you. Amen.