

*After*LIFF

JOHN LLOYD wrote *The Meaning of Liff* with Douglas Adams in 1983. He is the original producer of *The News Quiz*, *To the Manor Born*, *Not the Nine O'Clock News*, *Blackadder*, *Spitting Image* and *QI*. He has also produced many books, including *The Book of General Ignorance*, which has been translated into thirty languages. Married to Sarah, they have three little kelks and twelve prospidnicks.

JON CANTER is the author of the comic novels *Seeds of Greatness*, *A Short Gentleman* and *Worth*. He was script editor for *Fry & Laurie*, wrote stand-up with Lenny Henry and his journalism has appeared in the *Guardian*. His radio series *Believe It* won Best Scripted Comedy at the BBC Audio Awards. He lives in Suffolk with the painter Helen Napper and their yafford.

After
LIFF

*The New Dictionary
of Things There Should
Be Words For*

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FOREWORD by John Lloyd

It's thirty years since Douglas Adams and I wrote *The Meaning of Liff* and, four years later, *The Deeper Meaning of Liff*.

That they're both still in print is a testament to the simplicity and universal appeal of the idea: that all sorts of perfectly common things around us have somehow escaped having names, and that this can be easily remedied by recycling the ones on signposts.

It's a game anyone can play, and many do. Since Douglas's tragic death at the absurdly young age of forty-nine, his friends and admirers have gone on adding to his legacy by inventing new liffs – on his website h2g2.com, on my website qi.com, on Twitter's @That'sLiff, and in various competitions over the years run by his indefatigable brother James to raise money for Douglas's favourite charity, Save the Rhino.

Early in 2013, as a celebration of the original work, Radio 4 broadcast *The Meaning of*

Liff at 30. Listeners' own submissions were invited and this again produced a rich new crop of liffs. Just as it seemed a waste to have words cluttering up signposts when they could be usefully attached to something namelessly familiar, so it seemed an equal waste not to make use of all this public creativity. This book is the result. Many, many people have had a hand in it, and you can find their names (under my grateful thanks) in the acknowledgements at the back.

But there is one name, above all, to whom *Afterliff* owes its existence, that of my co-author, Jon Canter. Of course, nothing and no one can ever replace Douglas – his brilliance, his originality, his joyous genius – but when it comes to penning liffs at least, Jon comes awfully close.

The three of us were at university together and remained lifelong friends until that terrible day in 2001 when Douglas had his heart attack. Back in the 1970s, Jon and I had both, at different times, shared flats with Douglas and, in the eighties, Jon became the third (shamefully uncredited) author of *The Deeper Meaning of Liff*. He proved at once to be a master of the genre, coming up with many

of the best lines – including three of the six chosen for the *Deeper* back cover. His contribution to that book was incalculable, as it is to this.

We both hope you have as much fun reading *Afterliff* as we had writing it and, to Douglas, in whichever universe he may be, we say, ‘So Long, and Thanks for All the Liffs’.

JOHN LLOYD

Hammersmith, May 2013

A

Aachen *n.*

The fake name you add to the front of your mobile phone's address book to stop annoying the aast (q.v.).

Aast *n.*

The first person in a mobile phone's address book, who gets all the calls from handbags and pockets.

Ab Lench *adj.phr.*

Not up for anything much, really: the opposite of 'gung ho'.

Abbots Ripton *n.*

Man in a dog collar at a party who tells you he 'doesn't really believe in all that God stuff'.

Abcott *n.*

The tiny remnant of a bar of soap.

Aberdovey *n.*

A tribute band composed mostly of pigeons.

Aberglasney *n.*

The particular kind of self-pity induced by alcohol.

Aberlemno *n.*

The little shelf on a tennis umpire's stepladder where the soft drinks are kept.

Abernethy *n.*

Unit of fluffiness. In five-star hotels, the white towels and dressing gowns must be a minimum of 90 abernethy.

Acaster Malbis *n.*

One who stands at a pelican crossing, watches you press the WAIT button, and then presses it again.



Adbolton *n.*

Short, fast, baffling burst of sponsorship repeated either side of the commercial breaks in a TV show till it drives viewers mad.

Addison *n.*

The extra time you need to allow when taking a shortcut.

Adjungbilly *n.*

The ring of discarded leaflets on the pavement a few feet from the person handing them out.

Ae *n.*

Useful two-letter Scrabble word: a player who has drawn nothing but vowels.

Agharoo *n.*

A larger-than-life sneeze in a Bollywood comedy, used as the basis for a dance routine.

Aismunderby *n.*

The dent on either side of the nose of a person who wears glasses.

Alawoona *n.*

A sacred chant for the wellbeing of the Dow Jones Index.

Albox *n.*

A mail-order package that arrives but appears not to weigh anything.

Alkipi *n.*

Japanese thank-you-letter-writing torture.

Almurta *n.*

Code of silence among pets that stops your parrot from telling you what your cat just did on your bed.

Alvechurch *n.*

A place of worship in which the clergy outnumber the congregation.

Amazonia *pl.n.*

Small last-minute gifts ordered online to top up a main present that the giver suspects won't be good enough on its own.

Amby *adj.*

Reluctant to be the first to slag someone off but happy to join in as things hot up.

Amcotts *pl.n.*

Orange-tipped cotton buds found behind things in the bathroom.

Amesbury *n.*

The legal process by which a judge in a divorce case decides who gets custody of the couple's friends.

Ancaster *n.*

A name on a building with one of its letters missing.

Ando *n.*

The art of mastering Japanese toilets.

Anembo *adv.*

The way creative directors and commissioning editors sit: leaning back with their hands behind their head and their feet on the desk.

Anglesey *n.*

Hypothetical object at which a lazy eye is looking.

Annagry *adj.*

Infuriated by the last crossword clue.

Anney *n.*

A half-sucked Tic Tac or jellybean found sticking to a pair of sunglasses in the glove compartment.

Anthorn *n.*

(MEDICAL) A penis so embarrassingly small that the doctor secretly takes a picture of it on his phone.

Antist *n.*

A vet who specialises in insects.

Antrim *n.*

Barber's term for the unmentionable hair discreetly snipped from eyebrows, nostrils and earholes.

Arbroath *n.*

Throat-clearing designed to alert passers-by to your presence in the lavatory.



Arbuckle Junction *n.*

That point in the task where you realise it's going to be a lot harder than you thought.

Ardateggle *v.*

To poke burning pornography into the tiniest possible fragments.

Arkansas *n.*

Any name not pronounced the way it's spelt.

Aruba *n.*

Small bottle of scented liquid in a hotel bathroom that could be shampoo, moisturiser, disinfectant or liqueur.

Ashby Puerorum *n.*

One who prefaces every utterance with 'In my day . . .'

Askamore *n.*

An Italian waiter who keeps coming back to find out if everything's all right.

Askham Bryan *n.*

The junior journalist despatched to the scene of a disaster to gather answers to the question ‘How do you feel?’

Asquith *n.*

Person in a doctor’s waiting room who appears to have absolutely nothing wrong with them.

Aston Clinton *n.*

Clean-cut American student destined to become a partner in a corrupt legal firm.

Attunga *n.*

The ding that tells you the lift has arrived.

Attymon *n.*

A West Indian cricket enthusiast.

Audley End *n.*

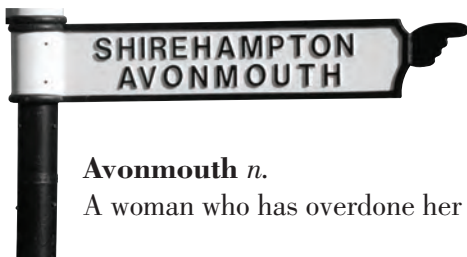
The sentence you read in bed and read in bed again and read in bed again and then your eyes close.

Aughnaloopy *n.*

A tangle of tights and bras.

Avening *ptcpl.v.*

Putting on your coat to say goodbye, then spending fifteen minutes saying it.



Avonmouth *n.*

A woman who has overdone her lipstick.