

## THE TWENTY TWELVER'S ROUGH GUIDE TO USEFUL POST-OLYMPIC EXPRESSIONS

**Babylondon** The meaning depends on how the word is pronounced. If the first syllable is accentuated with a hard A as in 'bay', it refers to the infantile phantasy of the city as an urban adventure playground supervised by kindly policemen, where everyone can live out their Olympic daydreams, be heroes just for one day, sing along to the Spice Girls and romp about on a giant inflatable depicting Boris Johnson in the bath. If the first syllable is pronounced as a soft 'ah' and the second syllable stressed, then it refers to a nightmare city where no-one can get any sleep because of the noise of the traffic, especially the emergency services that are on the go 24/7 thanks to the high number of accidents, attempted suicides, gun and knife crime incidents and the propensity of anyone under the age of 25 to take large amounts of drugs. Visitors and new arrivals to the city are especially prone to misunderstand which version of it they are living in, especially during Games time.

**Calibanality** refers to the obsession/compulsion to misquote or cite Caliban's big speech from *The Tempest* at the drop of a hat, and/or to attribute his words to Prospero, Brunel, Churchill, Gengis Khan or Margaret Thatcher. In extreme cases this is accompanied by the delusion that the speaker *is* Caliban. This may lead to the involuntary utterance of curses, a refusal to shave (women) or use cosmetics (men) while hearing tracks from Coldplay in your head at all times of the day and night. In some parts of the country the exchange of Calibanities has replaced commenting on the weather as the basis of public conversation between strangers. This is what the poet Laureate Carol Anne Duffy probably had in mind when she wrote 'We speak Shakespeare here'.

**Involuntary Post Olympic Depression (IPOD)** is a condition especially affecting Olympic athletes and twenty-twelvers. Its main symptoms are loss of appetite for sport in any form and allergic reactions to any mention of Lord Coe. In extreme cases there is a total loss of memory of events connected with the Games, sometimes accompanied by recurrent 'flash bulb' images of Usain Bolt making flamboyant gestures at the crowd. The condition is mainly treatable by watching Monty Python's 'Silly Olympics' while eating chocolates late at night or jogging in the pouring rain listening to Time Out's collection of the 100 Worst London songs. IPOD sufferers are reluctant to discuss their problems for fear of public ridicule, but it is now recognised as being a form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and is worth a day or two off work.

**Mash Up** Originally a virtually undanceable dance, a close cousin to the Twist, as in 'Everyone do the mashed potato' by Dee Dee Sharp and immortalised in the lines: 'It's the latest, it's the greatest, Mashed Potato, ya, ya, ya / Mashed Potato, feel it in your feet now / Mashed Potato, come on get the beat now, / Baby, come on honey, come on baby'. Subsequently transferred to the recording studio as a technique for sampling and

mixing two or more songs to create a new sound, and adopted by post-modern management consultants as a way of handling hot potatoes by inputting so many different kinds of data that no-one has the foggiest idea of what is going on. The term has increasingly become conflated with mosh up, to refer to an auto-destructive form of dancing, and to a state of mental meltdown due to the consumption of many different kinds of drugs or reading too many books about the Olympics.

**Olygarch** refers to members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the management boards of the local organising committees and delivery authorities. Olygarchs are by definition unelected and chosen because they represent particular sporting, national or Olympic interests. They spend much of their time travelling around the world meeting with one another and conversing in legacyspeak.

**Olygopolis** refers to the political, economic and transformation of the host city due to the impact of 'Olympification' (see below). This includes the creation of special transport network reserved for Olygarchs and Olygopolists (see below) who have the freedom of the city for the duration of the Games. The citizens of Olygopolis are expected by the municipal authorities to undertake a rigorous programme of physical exercise and diet for which they are rewarded with health bonus points that entitle them to receive priority treatment from the health services, while couch potatoes have to go to the back of the queue.

**Olygopoly** is a game played by multinational corporations whose object is to secure lucrative contracts or sponsorship deals from the Olygarchs. Olygopolists spend a lot of time, money and effort in winning friends and influencing people in high places, play a prominent part in promoting mega sporting events, and are known for their lavish hospitality. They were present in large numbers at the Opening Ceremony of 2012, where they could be distinguished by their inability to sing along with Sir Paul McCartney because they didn't know the words to *Hey Jude*.

**Olympification** denotes the process or strategy of re-describing, re-branding and re-positioning a whole lot of things, people and places that have nothing at all to do with sport and the Olympics and treating them as if they were an integral part of the event. The aim is to invest the target with additional material and symbolic value by associating it with the 'Olympic aura'. Sometimes this simply involves the use of a logo or strapline, but in most cases it is a more complicated manoeuvre that involves disembedding an object from the story it has to tell and re-inscribing it an Olympic discourse. 'Once Olympified, always Olympified' is the slogan used by the Olygarchs to persuade potential sponsors to invest, but market research indicates that the Olympic effect is transient and rarely outlives the event itself.

**Olympomania** is a condition of controlled public hysteria associated with conspicuous displays of euphoria, the consumption of unhealthy quantities of alcohol, drugs, Big Macs

and Coke, saturation media coverage and promotional hype. It is accompanied by a marked tendency to wave flags and weep at the drop of a cliché. The condition builds up in the period immediately preceding the Games, is at its most intense during the event itself, and then quickly dissipates, often to be followed by Involuntary Post Olympic Depression ( see above).

**Olympo-Patriarchs** A cultic group who venerate the memory of Saint Coubertin and strive to ensure that his ideals remain paramount within the Olympic movement. Every four years the cult gathers at His shrine in the foothills of Mount Olympus to give votive thanks for His legacy. They go as Ancient Greeks and have a lot of fun lighting the Olympic Torch. It is rumoured that some members of the cult are planning to break away and join the Druids, who get to wear fancy dress every year.

**Olympophiles** are people who live the Olympic dream and never wake up. They are to be found in all walks of life, but the condition is particularly prevalent amongst ‘wannabe’ or ‘has been’ athletes and their families. Olympophiles generate their own do-it-yourself heritage industry, with their collections of memorabilia, and their often obsessively detailed accounts of the events – many have visited every Games within living memory. For them, as for Olympic researchers, the Olympics are never over. There is no known cure, but some people grow out of it.

**Olympophobes** are people who are allergic to sport in all its forms, perhaps because they were bullied at school for being wimps and never chosen for teams, or because they are ideologically opposed to all kinds of competitive team games. The condition attracts its fair share of professional party poopers, miserabilists and nay-sayers but is not restricted to them. In advanced cases the sufferer has to stay indoors and listen to Jazz FM all day while the Games are on. Many Olympophobes left the UK for the duration, Tibet being a favoured destination on account of its not having an Olympic team. There is no treatment for the condition as such but there are Olympic survivor groups for those who enjoy commiseration. They should be distinguished from nay-sayers who are often sports enthusiasts and support Olympic Ideals, but who regard the present organisation of the Games as a travesty of the true Olympic spirit.

**Twenty-twelfer** Someone who is strongly identified with the London Olympics project, who acts as its ambassador or advocate, either in an official capacity, or informally. They include the Olympic volunteers, anyone who likes the 2012 logo and/or thinks Wenlock and Mandeville are wonderful. Also used to refer to young people who have grown up with the Olympics, who identify themselves retrospectively as belonging to a ‘2012 generation’ and feel that the rest of their lives are one long hangover from the party.