Tales of Hi and Bye

Greeting and parting rituals
around the world

We do it over and over again, day after day, and never seem to get enough of it.

Albanians do it. Zulus do it. Movie stars and plumbers do it. All around the world, people say hi and bye in innumerable languages and countless ways: they wave and bow and curtsey and shake hands and rub noses and fist-bump and mwah-mwah and perform a vast array of greeting and farewell rituals, so common and natural that no-one stops to notice ...

Tales of Hi and Bye provides a delightful, witty, and intriguing insight into the sometimes strange and often wonderful customs associated with an ordinary, everyday event.

Torbjörn Lundmark (known as TL) was born in Sweden and has called Australia home since 1978. He works as a professional writer, illustrator and cartoonist, and is the author of several books, including Quirky Qwerty: The Story of the Keyboard at Your Fingertips.
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Torbjörn Lundmark
Contents

Acknowledgements .................................................. x
To the reader .......................................................... xi
Introduction ........................................................... 1

Gestures & Signals

Take a bow: bending at the neck or waist ...................... 7
Hi, Hitler! arm salutes at various angles ...................... 18
Do a nose job: rubbing and sniffing as a greeting .......... 26
XXXX! the heartfelt kiss ............................................. 30
Flashy hello: the eyebrow flash ................................ 50
Getting the shakes: the story of the handshake .......... 54
Slaps, daps, thumps and bumps:
not so gripping handshakes ........................................ 71
I dips me lid: the hat as a courtesy tool ...................... 75
Hello? Hell, no! greeting refusals ................................. 83
Waves of emotion: greeting from a distance ............... 86

Customs & Behaviours

No hug for Dr Livingstone: a demonstration of restraint . 95
It hurts to say goodbye: the Parthian shot ................. 97
Contents

How stiff can your upper lip get? avoiding strangers . . . . . 99
Chinese whispers: greeting and parting rituals in China . 105
From Russia with love: sit on your case and say goodbye . . 114
Cut it out! how to avoid saying ‘hello’ . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 116
I don’t speak to my mother-in-law: avoidance language . 120
Phonethics: telephone mannerisms . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 124
Thanks for having me on!
names and forms of address in the media . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 128
Eskimodesty: greeting and visiting in the Arctic . . . . . 131

Names & Addresses

What’s so good about it?
the curious nature of ‘good-’ greetings . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 139
Ahoy, ahoy! Pick up the phone! ‘hello’ and its uses . . . . . 145
The unlucky Mr Szczęściarz:
foreign names in foreign places . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 150
Wang is King in China:
too many people, not enough names . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 153
Finding Björk: Icelandic names . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 157
Yoo-hoo! Who? You!
how Swedes don’t address each other . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 161
Mister Doctor: titles of medicos, surgeons and barbers . . 171
I forget my name: loss of first name by marriage . . . . . 174
When your coz is your sis: kinship terms . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 179
Contents

You, thou and other politenesses:
  familiar and polite ‘you’. .............................. 187

Include me out!
  dual, trial and other grammatical curiosities. ......... 194

For me to know and you to find out:
  naming and name taboos. .............................. 200

Bye-bye! how things have changed. ..................... 214

Postscript ............................................... 216

Notes .................................................... 218

Sources .................................................. 233

Index .................................................... 247
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To the reader

This is not a book of trivia. In its pages, you won’t learn how to say ‘hello’ in hundreds of languages, or find diagrams of every gesture on earth, or hit upon a long list of titles among the nobility of one country or another. Such things can easily be found by using the internet or other sources.

Nor is it a scientific book. It is not backed by massive research and weighty tomes of academic literature that all corroborate the undeniable facts and the absolute truth.

It is a book about customs, traditions, rituals and human behaviour – and that can be risky, because no two humans respond, perceive, experience or remember alike. People from the same culture or even the same locality may see things differently, apply different interpretations and act in different ways.

Lastly, this is not an all-encompassing encyclopaedia. It covers titbits from here and there on the globe, and from here and there in history. Humanity, after all, is a jumble. So, as you read about people and customs in this book, and miss customs and peoples and places that you think should have been included but aren’t, or find things that do not correspond to your own life, remember to think ‘some’ or ‘many’ or ‘most’ – but certainly not ‘all’.