



'I'm a trained cosmonaut – and the No 1 civilian reserve ready to visit the International Space Station'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's the turn of actor Brian Blessed

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Follow your dream.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Sumo wrestling. It holds a great inner spirituality at its core. I've spent time in Japan doing the voiceover for a series about it.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... The only photo I possess of my mother, Hilda, when she was seven. It disappeared five years ago. Mother died 20 years ago, aged 87.

The unending quest that drives you on... To go into space. I'm a fully trained cosmonaut and have completed 800 hours training, which has made me the No 1 civilian reserve ready to visit the International Space Station. I am determined to go up and I want to explore the Moon, Mars and beyond!

The poem that touches your soul... John Clare's I Am. It's about peace, tranquillity and being as one with the Creator, animals and yourself.

The prized possession you value above all others... An ancient Tibetan Thangka – an embroidered drape – given to me by the Dalai Lama in 1990 before my ascent of Everest.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... Not making a film about the heavyweight boxer Bruce Woodcock in 1966. He begged me not to do it because he didn't want to be famous again. So I pulled out.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd wake up on the Grand Savanna of Venezuela and meditate looking at Mount Roraima, then travel by boat to Angel Falls with my wife Hildegard. We'd climb to the top and admire the view. We'd then meet our daughter Rosalind, 37, on the Greek island of Santorini for a fish lunch. I'd bid them farewell and board Dan Dare's spaceship Anastasia and zoom to Mars where I'd scale Olympus Mons, which is 24km high. After that, I'd explore the Cydonia region on Mars, before returning to earth to meditate at the foot of Mount Olympus in Greece. To end the day I'd have dinner with my loved ones at a taverna.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Planting red acer trees in my garden in Surrey. I have about 150.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... In Search Of The Miraculous by the Russian writer Peter Ouspensky is the most staggering lesson in spiritual exploration.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd go to the jungles of Brazil and let the blue morpho butterflies settle on my invisible body.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Cruelty to animals. For God's sake stop killing rhinos and elephants.

The film you can watch time and time again... War And Peace by the Russian director Sergei Bondarchuk. Nothing in cinema compares to it. He used the entire Red Army for his battle scenes.

The person who has influenced you most... Harry Dobson, an amateur theatre director. He took me under his wing and got me a scholarship to drama school – unheard of for a miner's son.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Jesus Christ. I'd ask him what happened to him between the ages of 13, when he disappears from the Bible, and 31, when he reappears.

From top: Mount Everest, Bruce Woodcock, Paul Robeson, an elephant, a sumo wrestler, space, Dan Dare's ship Anastasia, Bondarchuk's War And Peace, a blue morpho butterfly and Jesus Christ

PS...

Jodie Foster and Matt Damon star in sci-fi blockbuster Elysium – in cinemas from Wednesday – while low-budget Julianne Moore drama What Maisie Knew arrives here on Friday with rave reviews. And Where You Stand, the new album from Travis, is out Monday



NEXT WEEK

- As The X Factor – and Sharon Osbourne – return, all four judges reveal how they'll shake the show up
- Royal cake maker Fiona Cairns on her rise to the top – plus recipes from her new book
- Britain's best TV listings