

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's *Cold Feet* actor Robert Bathurst

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My collection of cards for birthdays and first nights, hand-painted by my wife and children. I have 30 going back 15 years. They're a wonderful chronology of a period in my life.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Playing rugby as a child. I got my first injury at nine and continued to get mashed up until my knee got hurt at 18. I still get twinges now – I'd have been better off doing library duty.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My wife [artist Victoria Threlfall], but I'd rather not say how. It must remain private.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** A Scattering by Christopher Reid, a narrative in verse about the death of his wife. He expresses his feelings in the most beautiful language. I developed it for a stage show called Love, Loss And Chianti at last year's Chichester Festival.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To stage Love, Loss And Chianti in the West End. I hope to get a theatre for autumn next year.

Right: Ken Dodd.  
Above right:  
Daim bars.  
Far right: a  
steamer  
cargo ship



**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'd listen to the Pope in confession. I'm intrigued to know what he's been up to, but I expect he has the most pathetic sins.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Daim bars. And now they've made Daim ice cream too, which is just cruel.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** The plastic flotsam that washes up on the shores of the world. It shows how we treat our oceans as a dumping ground.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** An Englishman Abroad, a TV movie from 1983 starring Alan Bates as the spy Guy Burgess. It's delicious in every detail.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Lenin. I'd like to know if he thought Stalin mucked up his Bolshevik revolution.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Look out, not in. Be interested in others, not self-obsessed. Look at the universe, both physically and spiritually.



**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** National Hunt jump racing. I love the language and the stories – and the fact a jockey expects to fall once every 13 races, largely for our entertainment!

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** The £3 I lost in a pyramid scheme at school aged 13. It was a fortune to me then and I expected a huge return. It taught me never to expect something for nothing.

**The poem that touches your soul...** I love the lyrics to songs by the rock group Half Man Half Biscuit, especially 24 Hour Garage People. I put on their music loud when I'm feeling low – they're so funny it cheers me up.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm a strait-laced emotional retard like many characters I play. I'm a lot sharper and critical than people might expect.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Meeting Victoria through friends in 1982. We married in 1985. Meeting her was the end of loneliness. That's as much as I'll say.



'People often think I'm a strait-laced emotional retard like many characters I play. I'm sharper and more critical than people expect'

October day and we'd have a picnic by the loch and spend the afternoon watching otters. We'd spend the rest of the day on a train through India. We'd take our chances and buy dinner off one of the itinerant vendors, then end up at a secret beach I know in Kerala.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** A family holiday to Goa, India, at Christmas 2004. I rarely get family holidays because my work mucks it up, but everything worked out on this trip. It was so much fun.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** My parents Gillian and Philip died within a month of each other in 2009. They were in their 80s, but it was still a hideous time.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To be a good gardener – I don't have the touch. Maybe I'll crack it in my dotage.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** You are dust, and to dust you shall return. We are a mere speck and only here for a blip, so do not worry.

**The order of service at your funeral...** Some crying would be good, then they can play Tears (For Souvenirs) by Ken Dodd. Maybe they can scatter my ashes a few miles out to sea from Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex.

**The way you want to be remembered...** I'm not bothered about a legacy.

**The Plug...** Cold Feet is on Mondays at 9pm on ITV. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



## PS...

Gemma Arterton stars in futuristic thriller *The Girl With All The Gifts*, in cinemas Friday. Dominic Cooper is back on stage in *The Libertine* at Theatre Royal Haymarket from Thursday. And Bruce Springsteen's album *Chapter And Verse* is out on Friday



## NEXT WEEK

- Behind-the-scenes secrets from TV's riveting Victoria
- Part two of our brilliant Bake Off recipe series
- Monty Don's tips for taking plant cuttings
- Britain's best TV guide