

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's Olympic rower Helen Glover's turn

The prized possession you value above all others... My two Olympic gold medals from London 2012 and Rio. They're symbolic of eight years' solid hard work and the realisation of a dream.

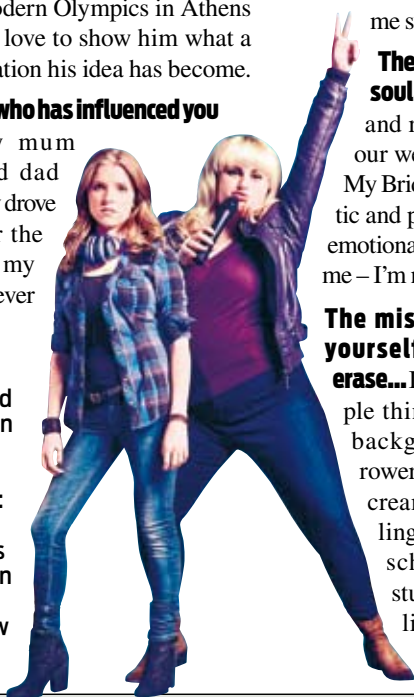
The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Doing a crazy 'running man' dance for Children In Need in 2012. It's had nearly 2 million views online.

The temptation you wish you could resist... I'm a total chocoholic. My obsessions vary, but I'm always up for a Cadbury's Creme Egg. I once ate 12 in a single day.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympics in Athens in 1896. I'd love to show him what a global sensation his idea has become.

The person who has influenced you most... My mum Rachel and dad Jimmy. They drove me all over the country for my sport, but never complained.

Right: Anna Kendrick and Rebel Wilson in *Pitch Perfect*. Above right: Olympic gold medals from London and Rio. Far right: a snow leopard



The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Winnie-the-Pooh stories bring back happy memories of my parents reading them to me. Steve [her husband, wildlife expert Steve Backshall] bought them all for me because he knows I love them.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd track snow leopards in the Karakoram Valley, Pakistan. They're rarely seen, so it would be amazing to be close to them.

The film you can watch time and time again... *Pitch Perfect*, a comedy from 2012 about a female cappella group. It helps me switch off after training.

The poem that touches your soul... A poem Steve wrote and recited from memory at our wedding. It was called *To My Bride* and it was very romantic and personal. I'm quite tough emotionally but he really touched me – I'm not saying I cried though!

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... It's frustrating when people think I'm from a wealthy background because I'm a rower. We have a family ice-cream business and my siblings and I all went to state school. I only ended up studying at Millfield public school because I won a two-year scholarship.



'My ideal meal would be just chocolate and a glass of red wine. I only had about two glasses in four years before the Olympics'



The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Always take the little opportunities – they may lead to a really big opportunity.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... People leaving litter on beaches. The tide washes it all out and it's killing marine life.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I love bird song. I have a game on my phone that tests your knowledge. I reckon I know about 40.

The unending quest that drives you on... To give back to all the friends and family who stood by me through all those years of training.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Devoting myself to rowing in 2008 when I was 22 changed everything. Until then I was playing hockey and tennis at a high level, but UK Sport tested me and saw I had the mental strength to be a rower.

The song that means most to you... *One Day Like This* by Elbow. It was the theme song for London 2012 and is loaded with emotion for me.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd wreck all the boats and equipment used by the fishermen who catch sharks, slice off their fins and throw them back in the sea alive. All to make soup.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... My wedding day last month was very special. I remember hugging Steve, surrounded by all the people I love, thinking, "To be doing this so soon after winning gold is incredible."

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd wake up with Steve at a little old house at Prussia Cove, Cornwall. We'd catch mackerel for breakfast and cook them on an open fire, then go paddle boarding alongside dolphins, whales and whale sharks in the Sea of Cortez, Mexico. We'd surf in Hawaii before having lunch in the Namib Desert in southern Africa, where Steve proposed to me last year. Steve and I would spend the rest of the day canoeing down the Amazon looking at toucans and jaguars, then have dinner in a tree top overlooking the rainforest. An ideal meal for me would be just chocolate and a glass of red wine. I only had about two glasses of wine in four years before

the Olympics, so these days I'm allowed some. We'd end the day round a campfire on a beach in Cornwall with all our friends and family.

The saddest time that shook your world... The death of my grandmother, Joan, during Christmas 2014. She was in her mid-90s and had said for years she was hanging on to see me compete at London 2012. She made it and was there at the finishing line.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To play the piano. I had a couple of lessons when I was 11, but gave it up for sport.

The philosophy that underpins your life... *Carpe diem* – seize the day. My athletics coach gave me a card with that on for my 13th birthday and it's always stayed with me.

The order of service at your funeral... I'd want it outside and for them to play *I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)* by The Proclaimers, which reminds me of fun university days. I want my ashes scattered on the sea at Prussia Cove.

The way you want to be remembered... She inspired others to have a go at sport.

The Plug... Helen Glover is an ambassador for the World Land Trust, a conservation charity protecting threatened habitats. worldlandtrust.org. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PS...

Emily Blunt is The Girl On The Train – in cinemas from Wednesday. Ken Stott and Reece Shearsmith star in The Dresser at London's Duke of York's Theatre on the same day. And Kaiser Chiefs' new album Stay Together is out on Friday



NEXT WEEK

- First Dates host Fred Sirieix on the old-fashioned art of wooing
- Tom Kerridge's awesome autumn recipes
- Now's the time to plant spring bulbs – Monty Don shows you how
- PLUS Britain's best TV guide