

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of fiendish questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week: former England rugby captain Matt Dawson

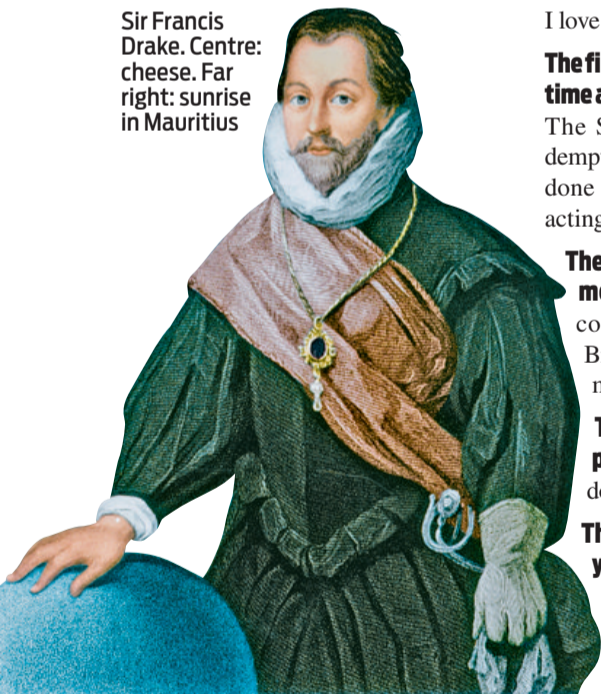


**The prized possession you value above all others...** My World Cup winner's medal from 2003. It's the ultimate in rugby and the realisation of my dream.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Publishing my diary of the British and Irish Lions tour in 2001. I criticised the head coach Graham Henry in it and upset the whole team.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Sir Francis Drake. I'd love to set sail with him. I'm in awe of people who've faced real fear and uncertainty.

Sir Francis Drake. Centre: cheese. Far right: sunrise in Mauritius



**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** I'm not a big reader but I've recently enjoyed David Walliams' autobiography Camp David.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'd go to MI6 to find out what the spies are up to.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** People dropping litter. I give it back and say, 'I think this is yours!'

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Cheese of all kinds – currently I love Tome de Provence.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** The Shawshank Redemption is brilliantly done with such superb acting and so many clever sub-plots.

**The person who has influenced you most...** Sir Ian McGeechan, my coach at Northampton and at the British and Irish Lions. He helped me progress to the highest level.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Champions don't want to win, they need to win.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** I'm fascinated by the mechanics of big business. There are many connections to sport, above all, team work.



**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** A Rolex watch given to me for my testimonial in 2003. It was engraved with the name of a friend, Mick Owen, who died from cancer, and had irreplaceable sentimental value. It was stolen in a burglary at my home.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To provide security for my family.

**The poem that touches your soul...** The hymn Jerusalem. When you heard the fans sing that during a match it would give you extra drive.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm arrogant and cocky. People have that impression from my playing days. I'm actually a very respectful, humble guy.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Getting married and having a family. I'm 41 now and I only got married in 2011. For years I was totally focused on rugby, but now I have different priorities.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd park wherever I wanted in London.

**The song that means most to you...** The National Anthem. It reminds me of standing on a pitch and looking up and seeing my dad in the stands.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I'd wake up early at home in west London with my wife Carolin and our son Alex, who's nearly two, and our baby Sam, who was born in January. We'd go to Mauritius to watch the sun come up. I'd have a breakfast of tropical fruits then a chilled morning on the beach. There'd be a golf range, so I'd warm up my swing before playing the Masters course at Augusta with a bunch of mates and Jack Nicklaus. Lunch would be with Carolin at Nobu in London for Japanese food, then we'd go to Seaworld in Florida for the kids – they're way too young but I love those places! Carolin and I would have a drink at the W hotel in the Maldives. I'd choose a nice cold pint

of Heineken. We'd have dinner at The Waterside Inn at Bray where I'd have the lobster followed by roast chicken to share, plus a bottle of Dom Perignon. By this time we'd be shattered and need to get home, ready for another early start!

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Winning the World Cup in Sydney in the dying seconds. I remember falling to the floor in total disbelief. All the hard times and extreme lows were suddenly worth it.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** Seeing my grandfather Sam die of cancer when I was 14. He was the first person close to me to die.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To learn to speak German. Carolin is German and it drives me mad when we go on holiday there and I sit around like a lemon while everyone is chatting away.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Tackle everything in life full on, but always play fair.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'm not religious but I'd be happy for my loved ones to decide what works for them. I'd like everyone to sing Jerusalem and Abide With Me. And I'd like my ashes kept in an urn on the mantelpiece so I can keep an eye on people!

**The way you want to be remembered...** As a loving son, a decent brother, a good husband and a great dad.

**The Plug...** Matt Dawson's Bioglan superfood range is available at Holland & Barrett. From £8.99, [www.hollandandbarrett.com](http://www.hollandandbarrett.com). ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: REX, GETTY, ALAMY

PS...

Scarlett Johansson's a man-eating alien in *Under The Skin* – in cinemas Friday. Natascha McElhone and Kristin Davis star in *Fatal Attraction* at the Theatre Royal Haymarket. And Paloma Faith's new album *A Perfect Contradiction* is out on Monday



**NEXT WEEK**

- Meet the hilarious new stars of TV's Gogglebox
- Five pages of chocolate recipes to die for
- Give Jamie Oliver's delicious Greek dishes a try
- PLUS Britain's best TV listings