

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: TV and radio presenter Johnny Vaughan



'I collect Edward VIII Coronation souvenirs. I love the fact they commemorate something that never happened'

The prized possession you value above all others... The original manuscript of the short story by Bruce Robinson that became his film *Withnail And I*. I bought it through a rare books dealer about ten years ago, but I won't say how much for. I totally love the film.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Shaving my head when my hair started receding eight years ago. You can't go bald gracefully on TV – you either have hair, or you shave your nut.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Making jokes about almost anything, which can get annoying.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Horatio Nelson. He was a real maverick and a proper Englishman.



Left: Horatio Nelson. Right: Edward VIII Coronation souvenirs. Far right: The Searchers

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... *Dead Souls*, by the 19th-century Russian writer Nikolai Gogol. It's about the value of a single life and the dehumanisation of people.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd attend the G7 Summit and play puerile practical jokes on the world leaders to show them up for what they are: idiots.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... The MPs' expenses scandal. I watch the expenses I charge for my business, yet we can't trust that lot to behave properly.

The person who has influenced you most... My dad, Randall, who's 79. He's an engineer so he really understands things and is always there with advice.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... When faced with a dilemma, follow your instincts.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My hair. I put thickening spray on it when it started falling out, but it looked like Fuzzy Felt and I lived in fear of sweating on TV and dye flowing down my face.

The poem that touches your soul... *Walking Away* by Cecil Day-Lewis. It's about letting go of the things you love.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Collecting Edward VIII Coronation souvenirs. I have tea cups, mugs and plates. I love that they commemorate something that never happened.



The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm the action film actor Jason Statham. It happens often, especially with Germans. I was in Portugal once when a group of them befriended me. I only twigged when they asked me about martial arts.

The unending quest that drives you on... To find new questions to answer.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... The birth of my daughter Tabitha when I was 34. From that moment I've done everything in terms of what it will mean for Tabitha [now 13], and my son Raff [11].

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To be the President of Chelsea Supporters club.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... Nothing could persuade me to break the law again. Prison is not a nice place! [Johnny served 24 months for cocaine dealing when he was 22.]

The song that means most to you... *Is It Something You've Got* by Tyrone Davis. It takes me back to the era of my early 20s when I had a blast.

The film you can watch time and time again... *The Searchers* from 1956 starring John Wayne. It's the greatest Western ever made.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd wake up in an Italian palazzo, which I'd own because on this day I'd be a mysterious and handsome Italian billionaire. I'd run my empire effortlessly all morning while having the finest food and wearing the best clothes. In the afternoon, I'd watch Chelsea beat Manchester United 3-2 at Stamford Bridge with Tabitha and Raff. After that, I'd board my private jet with all my mates – who would also be billionaires – and we'd fly to the Victoria's Secret fashion show at an unbelievable Las Vegas hotel and hang out with all the beautiful girls. Then we'd eat the

best steaks at Peter Luger steakhouse in Brooklyn, with the finest red wine, followed by the biggest Havana cigars. I'd end up back in bed at home in south-west London with my wife, Antonia.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... When Chelsea won the FA Cup Final on 17 May 1997.

The saddest time that shook your world... When my bulldog Harvey died four years ago aged 12. I was smashed up and sobbed like a baby.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Leave all decisions until the last minute. It means you have the best chance of having all the information.

The order of service at your funeral... I'll lay plans for a joke to be played during the service, like for a bunch of musicians to play sombre music but mess it all up. I want something amusing to remind people of my humour.

The way you want to be remembered... As a good mate who helped people be a bit happier as they started the day.

The Plug... Johnny is nominated for Speech Personality Of The Year for his talkSPORT show, *The Warm Up*, at the Radio Academy Awards on 12 May. Visit www.radioacademyawards.org. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: XPOSURE; ALAMY; WIREIMAGE; ISTOCK

PS...

Kristin Scott Thomas's taut new thriller Before The Winter Chill is in cinemas from Friday. Tony-winning Broadway musical The Pajama Game comes to London's Shaftesbury Theatre. And Lily Allen's comeback album Sheezus is out on Monday



NEXT WEEK

- Want to fill your house with fresh garden flowers all year round? Monty Don's brilliant guide shows you how
- Aidan Gillen takes us behind the scenes on *Game Of Thrones*
- More Perfect recipes from Felicity Cloake
- PLUS Britain's best TV guide