

From top: Jamaica, oysters, the stars of *High Society*, a croissant, Noël Coward, PG Wodehouse's *Galahad At Blandings*, Louis Roederer Cristal champagne and Marlene Dietrich

The prized possession you value above all others... A malacca cane once owned by Kumar Shri Ranjitsinhji, the first Indian to play in Test matches for England, in the 1890s. To have something of his feels very special.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... Not being able to speak French. I'd have so much more fun visiting France if I could.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...

I'd wake up at Paris's Ritz Hotel and have some delicious salmon kedgeree followed by croissants and French coffee. After a rum punch at Jamaica Inn in Jamaica, I'd begin lunch with oysters at Doyles restaurant in Sydney followed by lobster thermidor at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons hotel near Oxford. I'd watch Indian batsman Sachin Tendulkar get his first century at Lord's, then I'd take my daughter, Suki, 48, for dinner at Paul Bocuse's L'Auberge du Pont de Collonges in Lyon. If I had the energy, I'd go to a West End show – but not if it got in the way of dinner.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Skinny-dipping in St Tropez. Terrific fun, but at 72, it's not pretty.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... *Galahad At Blandings* by PG Wodehouse. My father used to read a lot of Wodehouse to me when I was a boy and this one makes me laugh the most. He is the funniest writer England has ever produced.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd visit the cellars of Louis Roederer in Reims, northern France, and tuck into its extraordinary vintages of Cristal champagne. I'm a boozy old thing.

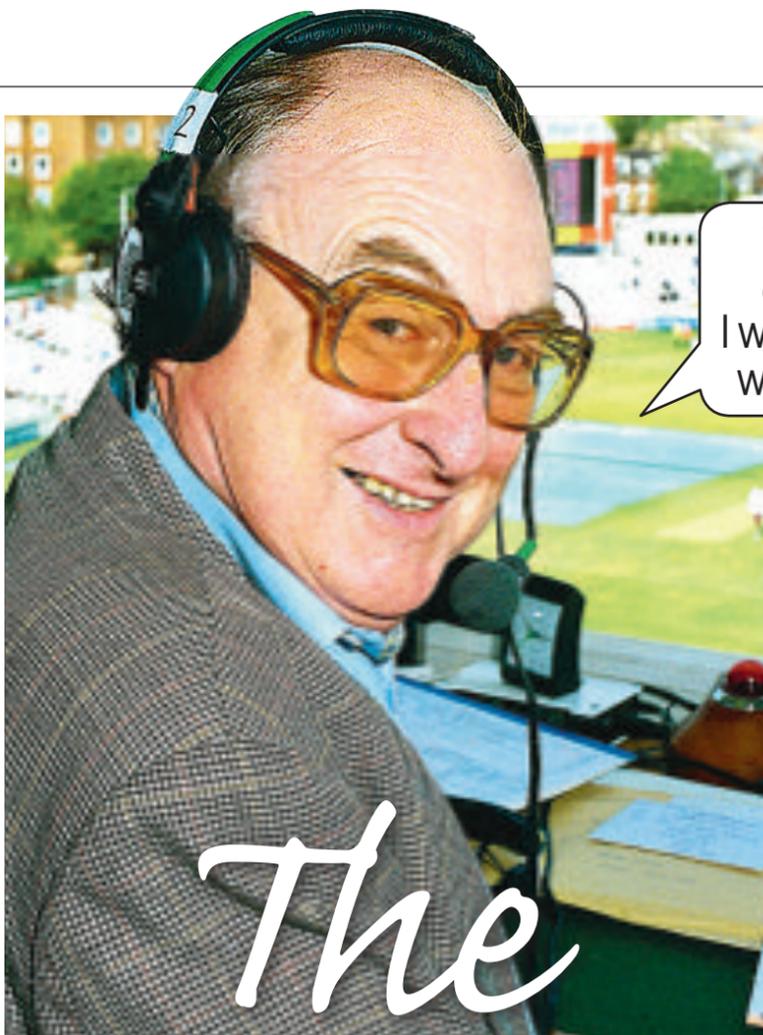
The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Pretentiousness in any form, but particularly when people use a five-syllable word when a short one will do.

The film you can watch time and time again... I adore *High Society* – the songs, like *True Love*, always lift me.

The person who has influenced you most... My mother. Her name was Grizel – she drew the short straw at the font. She was a tremendous character who shaped my mind.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Marlene Dietrich intrigues me. I'm sure we'd have a memorable evening.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Always be yourself.



'I'd love to have been a successful novelist. I wrote a novel once but it was utterly unprintable'

The

DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's cricket commentator Henry Blofeld

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I'm always on the lookout for cartoons by the 1920s Australian leg-spinner Arthur Mailey. I love cartoons. We live in a rather gloomy world and humour makes everything so much better.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... I've been frightfully good at losing money over the years, so it would be splendid to have some of that back!

The unending quest that drives you on... To be organised – I lose my wallet three times a day, my glasses four times a day, my diary five times a day and my mobile phone is permanently lost.

The poem that touches your soul... Tennyson's *Ulysses*. I learnt it off by heart during my first term at Eton. It's a remarkable piece of verse that reminds one that it's a great adventure to be alive in this world. It also brings back happy memories of school.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I live off the proceeds of a big estate. My family had land in Norfolk, but it went to my brother. I work hard but have tastes far in excess of my income. However, I'll be damned if I'll change!

The event that altered the course of your life and character... When I was 17 at Eton I cycled under a bus. My skull was fractured and I was unconscious for 28 days. Until then I was a promising cricketer and had scored a century at Lord's, but my reflexes were ruined.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd steal a set of Wodehouse first editions. I had them once, but sold them to collect cricket memorabilia. I still miss them.

The song that means most to you... Noël Coward's *A Bar On The Piccola Marina*. We met in Jamaica in 1961 and became friends. He never stopped talking and was extremely funny.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... When I got on the BBC's list of Test commentators in 1968. I was elated. It is the great joy of my life.

The saddest time that shook your world... When my Labrador, Punch, died. I was 12 and it was the first time I realised things did not last forever.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I would love to have been a successful novelist. I wrote a lamentable novel called *A Decent Time Limit* once. It was utterly unprintable.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Four words: give it a go.

The order of service at your funeral... Leaving instructions would be vanity. Those who love me will get it right. My body will be like an old overcoat that has lasted well, but needs to go.

The way you want to be remembered... As someone who had heaps of fun, and gave enjoyment to many.

The Plug... Do join me at my one-man show, *Blowers, Shaken, Not Stirred*. Visit www.henryblofeld.co.uk. Tune in to Test Match Special on BBC Radio Five Live Sports Extra this summer. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

High School Musical's Zac Efron takes his grittiest role yet in

The Lucky One – in cinemas now. Danny DeVito makes his

West End debut in The Sunshine Boys at the Savoy Theatre.

And Damon Albarn's folk album Dr Dee is out on Monday



NEXT WEEK

- Former cricketing hellraiser Freddie Flintoff goes really wild on his new TV show
- Behind the scenes on fantasy epic *Game Of Thrones*
- Jamie Oliver rustles up three very naughty chocolate treats
- PLUS Don't miss Britain's most detailed TV listings guide