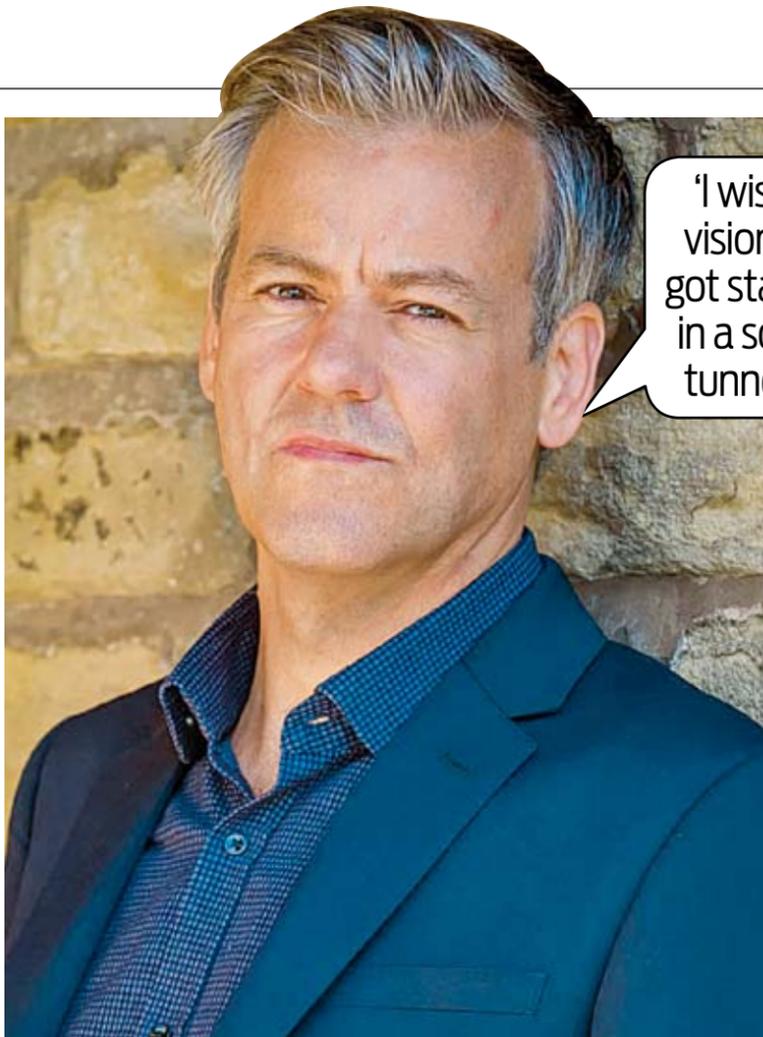


The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's Sherlock star Rupert Graves



'I wish I could have perfect vision back in my right eye. I got stabbed in it with a sword in a school play, and I've had tunnel vision in it ever since'

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not concentrating at school. I left at 15 with a few low-grade CSEs, and I've had to wing it ever since. I've always felt a bit insecure about my education.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Showing off. Whether it's telling bad jokes, pulling funny faces or doing silly accents, I can't help myself. I've even broken bones doing mad stuff.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The US detective novel *Black Cherry Blues* by James Lee Burke. It has beautifully drawn but flawed characters.

The person who has influenced you most... The theatre director Frank Hauser. He directed me in my second professional play, the comedy *Candida* by George Bernard Shaw, when I was 23. I hadn't trained as an actor so I felt out of my depth, but he taught me to go on my instinct.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Philadelphia Story from 1940, with Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant and James Stewart. It's brilliantly funny.

Right: Katharine Hepburn and James Stewart in *The Philadelphia Story*. Above right: a Gibson guitar like Rupert's. Far right: Nelson Mandela

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'm an Arsenal fan, so I'd listen to manager Arsène Wenger talking tactics in the dressing room at half-time.

The prized possession you value above all others...

My 1965 Gibson ES-120T electric guitar. I bought it last year for £1,100 and I love its rich, jazzy sound.



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

I'd encourage them to trust their own judgement.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... Perfect vision in my right eye. I got stabbed in it with a sword in a school play, and I've had tunnel vision on that side ever since.

The unending quest that drives you on... To squeeze as much enjoyment out of life as possible.

The poem that touches your soul... The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock by TS Eliot. It's full of sadness and regret.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That writer and poet Robert Graves was my dad, and Olympic diver Tom Daley is my son because he looks like me!

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Joining the circus when I was 17. I replied to a YTS offer at my local Jobcentre in Weston-super-Mare and became Tomato the Clown for a while on £25 a week. It was my first chance to perform professionally, and it helped me get my Equity card.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... My own intolerance to other drivers. I'm probably as guilty of bad driving as them.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...

Nelson Mandela. I didn't appreciate just how great he was until I read his obituaries.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Darts. I used to play at the pub, but I can't now because I've got five kids! It's thrilling that the difference between winning and losing is a fraction of a millimetre.



PS...

Bradley Cooper is *The Elephant Man* at London's Theatre Royal Haymarket from Tuesday. George Clooney stars in sci-fi adventure *Tomorrowland*, in cinemas from Friday. And Brandon Flowers of *The Killers* releases a solo album, *The Desired Effect*, on Monday



NEXT WEEK

- The real story behind the Duke of Wellington's boots and the Waterloo battlefield
- As BGT reaches the live finals, meet our pick of the contenders
- PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings



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