



The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: footballer and pundit Gary Lineker

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Winston Churchill. I share the same birthday as him – 30 November – which is why my middle name is Winston. To hear his stories would be incredible.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Put your heart and soul into every good opportunity you get. Work really hard and give it your all. Then, even if it doesn't work out, you won't have any regrets.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... The theatre. I have really got into it during the past three years because Danielle has been doing a bit of acting. It's never interested me before, so it's surprised me how much I love it.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... I've lost a lot of football matches!

The unending quest that drives you on... To stay fit. I make myself go to the gym at least three times a week.

The poem that touches your soul... I haven't got one – I'm not that deep!

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... My reputation as a ladies man is all rubbish. I've never messed around or had affairs. I've always been a faithful husband.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... My son George [now 20] was diagnosed with leukaemia when he was two months old. He had months of treatment, but he came through. Dealing with that gave me a greater perspective on life.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I would park anywhere with impunity.

The song that means most to you... Danielle says I only like depressing music, so Coldplay's Yellow is a great song for me. Really miserable!

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Winning the FA Cup with Tottenham in 1991.

The saddest time that shook your world... When the doctors told Michelle and I that George had leukaemia. They said his chances were not as good as 50-50, but not as bad as ten per cent.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To present a programme when England win the World Cup. To say 'England, World Champions' would be a dream come true. One day...

The philosophy that underpins your life... Always try to do the right thing and always be true to yourself.

The order of service at your funeral... I'm not religious, so I don't want any prayers or hymns. Alan Hansen [Gary's co-star on Match Of The Day] can give the eulogy – although I'll be gutted if he outlives me. They can scatter my ashes in the six yard box at Wembley so I don't have to track back for offside ever again!

The way you want to be remembered... As a decent bloke, who was good at what he did and sold a few crisps!

The Plug... Gary stars in the new Walkers TV advert. To find out more visit www.facebook.com/walkers. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

The prized possession you value above all others... The Golden Boot I got for being top scorer at the Mexico World Cup in 1986. It changed my life. I'm also the only English player ever to win one, which is nice.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... Losing the penalty shoot-out against Germany in the semi-final of the 1990 World Cup in Italy. I look back and always think, 'If only'.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd wake up with my wife, Danielle, at the Hotel Costes in Paris, then spend the morning in Ravello on Italy's Amalfi Coast. We'd nip back to Paris for lunch at L'Avenue with a decent bottle of red wine, like a Lynch-Bages '86. Then we'd hit the beach at St Barts in the Caribbean with my boys [Gary has four sons, 14-20, from his first marriage to Michelle Cockayne] and Ella [Danielle's daughter, ten]. Danielle and I would then go shopping on Melrose Avenue in LA and have a sundowner cocktail on Malibu beach before dinner at Cecconi's. We'd spend the night at the Bel-Air hotel.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Having too much sugar in my tea. I'll easily have five spoonfuls.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... A Good Walk Spoiled by John Feinstein about the lives of professional golfers on the PGA tour. It really got inside the players' minds and taught me so much about golf.

The priority activity if you were the invisible man for a day... I'd spend a day at the White House watching President Obama. I'd be interested to know if he really makes the decisions.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Parents shouting at their kids during junior football matches. They instil a fear in children, which is why we've struggled to create skilful players in Britain. I've watched my four boys go through school football without saying a word on the touchline.

The film you can watch time and time again... One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest is a classic and Jack Nicholson is brilliant in it. It's poignant and funny.

The person who has influenced you most... George Dewis, who was the junior and youth team coach at Leicester City. He was amazing at training forwards. I wouldn't have had the career I did without him.

From top: Ravello on the Amalfi Coast, Winston Churchill, A Good Walk Spoiled, The Golden Boot, Coldplay, sugar, a bottle of Lynch-Bages red, the Hotel Costes and Jack Nicholson in One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest

PS...

Meryl Streep's new romcom for grown-ups, Hope Springs, is in cinemas now. Rob Brydon stars in Alan Ayckbourn's comedy A Chorus Of Disapproval at London's Harold Pinter Theatre. And The Killers have a new album, Battle Born, out Monday



NEXT WEEK

- The Britain's Got Talent stars making a bid for global success
- Delicious dishes the Downton Abbey kitchens might have served up
- Jamie Oliver's homemade pickles
- PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings guide