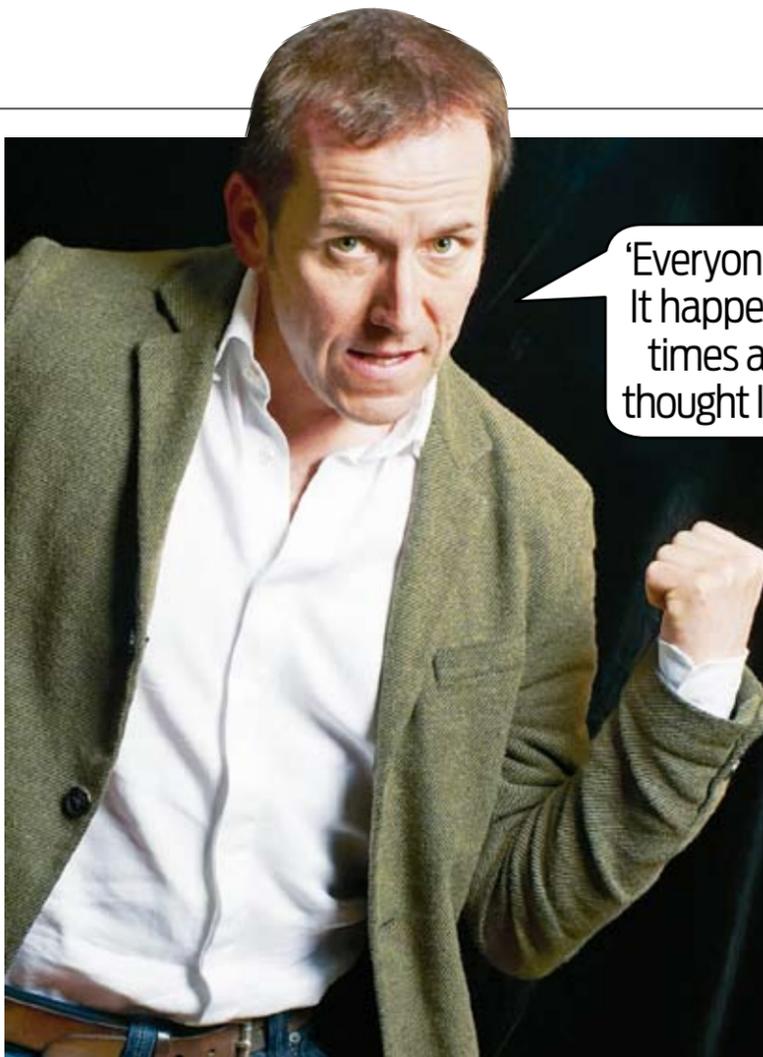


The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's actor and comedian Ben Miller



The prized possession you value above all others... One of Eric Morecambe's pipes. I bought it five years ago for a fortune on condition that I never reveal how much I paid for it or who I bought it from. I'm a huge fan of Eric's and I treasure it. I keep it in a safe.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... That I've never had a fistfight! I had scrapes at school, but I've never punched anyone or been punched. I've missed out on part of social discourse.

The film you can watch time and time again... Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid. Paul Newman and Robert Redford are the all-time great movie double act.



Left: Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid. Above right: Carrot cake. Far right: Bringing It All Back Home by Bob Dylan

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Fight by Norman Mailer. It's about the Rumble In The Jungle fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman in Kinshasa in 1974. It captures the essence of fighting.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Cake, especially carrot cake from Gail's bakeries around London.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Find what you love to do as a job and you'll never have to work in your life.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd hang out with The Rolling Stones as they record an album. To see how they create their songs would be an amazing experience.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Bad manners. We're all happier when we're considerate to other people.

The person who has influenced you most... My father, Michael. He was principled, intelligent and funny. If I can be a quarter of the man he was, I'll be happy. He died of cancer in 2011 at 73.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Albert Einstein. I studied physics and did a PhD for three years. I'd love to hear Einstein's take on the advancements since his work.



The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... The search for life on other planets. I think we'll find something within 20 years.

The unending quest that drives you on... To create comedy that will stand the test of time.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My first guitar, which was given to me when I was 14. It went missing about ten years ago.

The poem that touches your soul... Mending Wall by Robert Frost. It's about two neighbours building a wall and reveals a truth about human nature.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm Rob Brydon! It's extraordinary and I wish I could convince people I'm not him. It happens sometimes five or six times a day. Even Stephen Fry thought I was him at the BAFTAs last year.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd impersonate a detective during a gangland murder investigation. It would be incredible to see how murder teams work.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Meeting my comedy partner Alexander Armstrong in 1990. He was living on a barge in Chiswick and we clicked one booze-sodden evening. He's like a brother – without him, I wouldn't have a career or a life!

The song that means most to you... Love Minus Zero by Bob Dylan on his record Bringing It All Back Home. It's so romantic. A friend read the words at my wedding to Jessica last September.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd watch the sunrise at Topanga Canyon in Malibu, then have breakfast at Made By Bob, a deli in Cirencester, Gloucester. I'd have pancakes, poached eggs, bacon, maple syrup and a double espresso. I'd walk that off in Gairloch in the Highlands of Scotland with my wheaten terrier, Ruby. Lunch would be with Jessica on the island of Ischia, Italy. After that, we'd drive from Cape Town to the Franschoek vineyards to taste white wine. Then we'd head to Sydney where we'd be joined by our kids Harrison, who's two-and-a-half, and Sonny, eight [from his

first marriage]. We'd take a boat around Sydney, where I'd have cuttlefish for dinner. We'd end the day at the Shutters On The Beach hotel in Santa Monica. My nightcap would be a tonic water with lime juice and cane syrup.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Winning the 1,500m in 5 min 16 sec, aged 15, at school in Nantwich, Cheshire. My record still stands!

The saddest time that shook your world... Seeing the countryside where I grew up get over-developed. It used to be wild with hedgerows and rivers.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To be in a band. I was in one called The Dear Johns at college and that's still what I'd love to do.

The philosophy that underpins your life... If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him! It comes from Buddhist teaching and is, of course, not to be taken literally. It means always be mistrustful of anyone who positions themselves as a guru and says they have the answers.

The order of service at your funeral... I want the hymns How Great Thou Art and Jerusalem and a Monty Python sketch. I'm undecided about burial or cremation – I don't fancy either.

The way you want to be remembered... With love and as someone who brought a bit of laughter.

The Plug... Ben's movie What We Did On Our Holiday is out on 26 September. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: GRANT LEWIS; ALLSTAR; ALAMY

PS...

Kristin Scott Thomas is in Greek tragedy *Electra* at London's Old Vic theatre from Monday. British comedy *What We Did On Our Holiday*, with David Tennant, is in cinemas on Friday. And Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga's album *Cheek To Cheek* is out Monday



NEXT WEEK

- We're behind the scenes on ITV's new murder mystery series Grantchester
- Delicious healthy recipes from the Hairy Bikers
- Monty Don's secrets for super peppers
- PLUS Britain's top TV guide