



From top: MI6 HQ, a donor card, a bottle of Villa Maria sauvignon blanc, Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi in *The Blues Brothers*, a Suzuki DR650 motorbike, Michael Thomas scoring for Arsenal against Liverpool in 1989, Steve Martin and a cheese and pickle sandwich

The prized possession you value above all others... My family photos. I've got 1,200 of my kids – Susie, three, and my son Bobby, 18 months – on my iPhone. I only have two pictures of my mum Shirley, who died when I was six. They're irreplaceable.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... Dumping a girlfriend when I was at university so I could go out with one of her best friends. I went out with the new girl for five years but found out she'd been having an affair with my best mate for three of them!

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

I'd start the day with a walk around an empty and foggy St Mark's Square in Venice with my wife Katie. We'd go skiing in Cervinia in Italy, then shopping in Manhattan, stopping at a New York deli for a sandwich. The kids would join us on a beach in Thailand, then I'd go scuba diving. We'd watch the sunset over Ayers Rock in Australia, then Katie and I would go back to New York for a Broadway show. I'd end the day with the family on a boat on the Doubtful Sound fjord in the South Island of New Zealand, drinking a local bottle of Villa Maria sauvignon blanc.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Cheese and pickle sandwiches with crusty bread. They're so fattening.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... *A Prayer For Owen Meany* by John Irving. It's about the absence of a mother, so I really connect with it.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd wander around MI6 headquarters in London listening to all the secret meetings.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Wilful stupidity. I can't stand people who take pride in ignorance.

The film you can watch time and time again... *The Blues Brothers* from 1980. John Belushi was a big hero in my teens and I love him in that film.

The person who has influenced you most... The comedian Dave Allen [who died in 2005]. He came to see me at the Edinburgh Festival 20 years ago.

We had dinner afterwards and he complimented my act. That spurred me on.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... The Russian playwright Anton Chekhov. He died just before the Russian Revolution, so it would be fascinating to know what he thought of Russia today.



'My biggest regret is dumping a girl so I could go out with her friend, who then cheated on me'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: comedian and actor Alan Davies

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Always listen to people, you might learn something – even if it's where to find a good chip shop!

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Motorbikes. I go to MotoGP races and love watching these courageous guys ride lethal machines.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My Suzuki DR650 motorbike, which was stolen when I was 29. It was my pride and joy.

The unending quest that drives you on... To perform the perfect gig where you ad-lib a lot with a great audience.

The poem that touches your soul... A friend, John Hegley, is a poet and he wrote a poem about Katie and me for our wedding. It was very special.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... People think I'm an idiot because of all the things I get wrong on QI. But it may not be a misapprehension!

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Going to Loughton College of Further Education in Essex at 16. I did media studies A-level, which introduced me to drama.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd bury an architect who once worked for me in a concrete pylon on a flyover. His plans for a house I used to own ended up costing four times the estimate.

The song that means most to you... *St Swithin's Day* by Billy Bragg. His album *Brewing Up* spoke to me when I was 18. He seemed to know what it's like for a boy to become a man.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Michael Thomas scoring the second goal against Liverpool which meant Arsenal won the League in 1989.

The saddest time that shook your world... Losing my mum in 1972. She was 38 when she died from leukaemia. It was like a massive emotional depth charge had been detonated which would bubble up throughout my life. I still think of her every single day.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I'd love to make a film with Steve Martin.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Look for the good in the world. Don't focus on the bad things.

The order of service at your funeral... I'm not religious, so I don't want a church service. I carry a donor card, which I think is important, and I'm hoping there won't be much left of me before cremation. I'd like the coffin to disappear to *Everybody Needs Somebody To Love* by the Blues Brothers and I'll leave enough money for people to have a drink and a few laughs.

The way you want to be remembered... Fondly by my wife and children. And as someone who spent ages trying to correct all the wrong things about himself on Wikipedia!

The Plug... Alan Davies' stand-up show *Life Is Pain* is at London's Hammer-smith Apollo on 16 and 17 February. Visit www.mickperrin.com. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

Daniel Day-Lewis shines in Spielberg's Lincoln, in cinemas from Friday. Anna Maxwell Martin, Gina McKee and Tamzin Outhwaite are Di And Viv And Rose at London's Hampstead Theatre. And star-studded Hurricane Sandy benefit album 12-12-12 is out Monday



NEXT WEEK

- Sir David Attenborough on Earth's most extraordinary creatures
- Behind the scenes on *Silent Witness* with Emilia Fox
- Three classic Italian dishes – the Jamie Oliver way
- Plus Britain's best TV listings guide