



From top: Chesil Beach, Jesus Christ and Rococo's potato-shaped chocolates

Above: The Magpie by Claude Monet. Right: Audrey Hepburn in Roman Holiday. Below: a Blue Peter badge



The prized possession you value above all others... A painting by the English artist Edna Bizon of a cow eating straw that I bought in the 80s for £500. I live next to a farm in Dorset, so it's fitting. It's very realistic and she stares back at me in my breakfast room.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... That I've not saved for my old age. When I've had money, I've always enjoyed spending it. I'm 76 and I need to keep working.

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

I'd begin with a drive along Dorset's Jurassic coast. I'd walk on Chesil Beach, then have breakfast at the Hive Beach Cafe at Burton Bradstock. From there I'd arrive in Alaska in the depths of winter. I'd look around the art galleries and at the ice sculptures, and hopefully see some moose. I'd take a high-speed snowmobile ride across the ice – it can be scary but very exciting! After that, I'd do a whistle-stop tour of two of my favourite cities – Vancouver and Boston. I'd have a delicious dinner in Bologna with friends, then end the day back in Alaska at the Chena Hot Springs relaxing in a big outdoor Jacuzzi while watching the Northern Lights.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Designer chocolates shaped like new potatoes made by Rococo, in Chelsea. They're divine – but not cheap!

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Prospero's Cell by Lawrence Durrell about his time in Corfu in the late 30s. It reminds me of a holiday there in 1976 when I bumped into Lawrence and had lunch with him. Later he posted me a signed copy of the book, which I will always treasure.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd eliminate all the awful dictators.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... The way London Underground stations are organised so that everyone bumps into one another.

The film you can watch time and time again... Roman Holiday. I've always adored Audrey Hepburn. When I was 22 I had a nose job and asked the surgeon to make the new one just like Hepburn's – but he said it wasn't possible!

The person who has influenced you most... An art teacher called Albert Adams. I did a two-year History of Art course in the mid-80s and he taught me how to appreciate paintings.



'It's nonsense that I'm gay, I've always gone out with men. If I wrote the *real* story of my life people would be shocked!'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: Blue Peter legend Valerie Singleton

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Jesus Christ. On a basic level, I'd love to know what he looked like.

On a bigger level, I'd ask him if he approved of all the things that have happened in his name. Just imagine the conversation!

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Have a go and do not fear failure because at the very least you will have tried.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Astronomy. I like to lie on a sun lounger looking at the stars. Recently I saw a meteor with a great spray of white. Amazing!

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A diamond ring my parents gave me for my 21st birthday. It cost £12.50 – a fortune in 1958. It vanished from the Blue Peter studio.

The unending quest that drives you on... To never lose my curiosity.

The poem that touches your soul... I'm moved by this line written by a young girl that was translated from Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, 'You did not come to the river tonight. I think you do not love me any more.'

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm gay! It's utter, total, stupid nonsense. I've always gone out with men, probably far too many. If I wrote the *real* story of my life it would totally shock a lot of people, but I'm not brave enough.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Getting the job on Blue Peter in 1962 was wonderful and changed everything.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd steal Claude Monet's *The Magpie* painting from the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

The song that means most to you... What's Going On by Marvin Gaye. It makes me want to dance.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Buying my flat in Fulham in 1985. It gave me a great sense of security as well as freedom. I sold the flat in 2005 and moved to Dorset.

The saddest time that shook your world... The death of my mother Eileen. She died of septicaemia in hospital after a fall. She was 84.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To have at least one more successful romance before I die! But I only really like men who are much younger than me.

The philosophy that underpins your life... To live in the moment.

The order of service at your funeral... My body's going to medical research but whatever's left I'd like to be cremated. I've left my friends specific things in my will and they can fight over the rest.

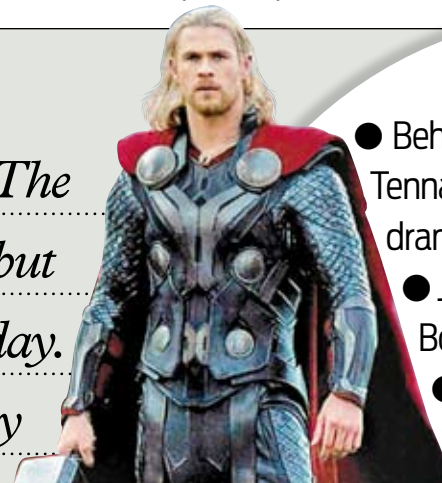
The way you want to be remembered... She was always great fun to be with.

The Plug... I am a director of Simplicity Computers, which has developed software called Envelope that makes computers easier to use. Visit www.simplicitycomputers.co.uk. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

Chris Hemsworth is back as the hammer-wielding god in Thor: The Dark World, from Wednesday. Rupert Grint makes his stage debut in Jez Butterworth's Mojo at London's Harold Pinter Theatre today. And Reflektor, the new album from Arcade Fire, is out on Monday



NEXT WEEK

- Behind the scenes on David Tennant's gripping new legal drama *The Escape Artist*
- Jamie Oliver's sizzling Bonfire Night banquet
- PLUS Britain's most detailed TV listings