

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week: singer and TV presenter Aled Jones



'People think I'm still a 13-year-old choirboy in a ruff. They see me in a pub with a pint and look shocked.'

**The prized possession you value above all others...** The gold disc for my first album as an adult. It was released in 2002 when I was 31 and was called – imaginatively – Aled! As a child I'd sold seven million records, so it was a huge relief when that album went gold.

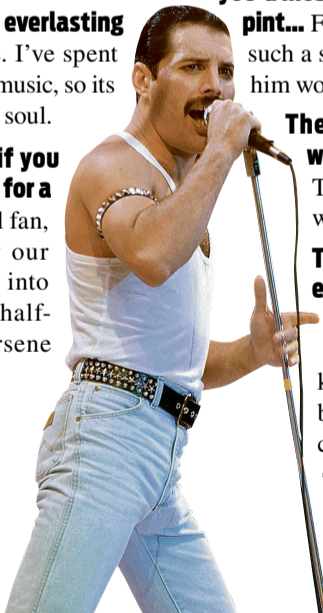
**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Turning down The Johnny Carson Show in America when I was 14. Neither me, nor my mum and dad had heard of him, so we said no.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Ginsters Cornish pasties! I drive a lot and I'm weakest at 1am when I stop at a motorway service station. Those pasties smile at me like the devil.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** The Bible. I've spent my life singing church music, so its spirit is seared onto my soul.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'm a big Arsenal fan, but I'm dismayed by our team of late, so I'd go into the dressing room at half-time to hear what Arsene Wenger says to them.

Right: Freddie Mercury. Above right: Walking In The Air. Far right: Aled getting an MBE from Prince William in 2013.



**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** All-vaulting ambition. You come across it a lot in 'showbiz' and it's ugly.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Die Hard. It's kept me entertained on countless nights in hotels because it's always on. Alan Rickman is brilliant as the baddie.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My wife Claire and our children Emilia, 12, and Lucas, nine. We got married in 2001 and I've been so happy ever since.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Freddie Mercury. He was such a showman, so a pint with him would be entertaining.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Treat others how you want them to treat you.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Wine and gastronomy. I'm not brilliant in the kitchen, but I'm getting better. I love wine, especially if it's from Tuscany.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd steal a private jet.



**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm still a 13-year-old choirboy in a surplice and ruff! People see me in a pub with a pint and look shocked. I'm a middle-aged man of 43.

**The song that means most to you...** Walking In The Air. It's played a huge part in my life. I even get builders shouting 'I'm walking in the air...' when I go by.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I'd spend the day with my family and start with a full English breakfast at The Olympic – a cinema and restaurant near my home in Barnes, west London. We'd sit outside because I love watching the village wake up. After that, I'd play tennis on Centre Court at Wimbledon, then we'd go to Circular Quay in Sydney for lunch. I'd have a Balmain Bug lobster and a few glasses of Australian sauvignon blanc. I'd have a snooze in the afternoon, then wake up on Macaroni Beach on Mustique. I'd swim, then sit on the sand with a cold beer as the sun went down. On this day, I'd see the optical phenomenon known as the 'green flash' as the sun disappears. In the evening, Marco Pierre White's Oak Room restaurant would

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** My boy soprano voice. I took it for granted.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To be as good at my job as I can be.

**The poem that touches your soul...** For The Fallen by Laurence Binyon, about the First World War. It's so moving.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** My voice breaking. It happened gradually after my 16th birthday, but we announced that I was retiring before it had gone. Not many careers end at 16. But it made front-page headlines all over the world.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To write more music and to have a go at breaking America.

re-open in Piccadilly. I loved that place and on this night Marco would cook for Claire and me. Marco's a friend and he said he used to listen to my music when I was a kid to calm him down after a night in the kitchen! I'd leave the menu to him, but we'd tuck into a bottle of Brunello wine. I'd end the day at home.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Getting my MBE from Prince William in 2013. I knew Princess Diana and had sung for her and Charles, so it felt like I'd gone full circle.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** When my grandmother Annie died when I was about eight. It was the first time I had to comprehend death.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Terry Wogan gave me this bit of advice, 'Spread yourself as *thinly* as possible. Then, it's hard to get rid of you!'

**The order of service at your funeral...** It will be a church service, but I won't be there, so I don't mind what's played or what readings there are.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As someone who tried, who was kind and, hopefully, made a difference.

**The Plug...** Aled Jones stars in White Christmas at the Dominion Theatre. Visit [www.whitechristmasmusical.co.uk](http://www.whitechristmasmusical.co.uk). His new album The Heart Of It All is out on 24 November. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: DAN KENNEDY, ALAMY, PA, REX

## PS...

Keira Knightley stars in wartime thriller *The Imitation Game*, in cinemas Friday. Behind *The Beautiful Forevers*, with Meera Syal, is at The National Theatre from Monday. And Cheryl Fernandez-Versini's new album, *Only Human*, is out Monday



## NEXT WEEK

The secrets behind creating the world of *Downton Abbey* ● Fabulous family feasts you can make in a flash ● How to create a wonderfully scented garden ● PLUS Britain's biggest and best TV guide