



From top: Venice's Hotel Danieli, Richard Attenborough in *Miracle On 34th Street*, Emmeline Pankhurst, Bette And Joan: *The Divine Feud*, Donny Osmond and a KitKat, a ripe Brie, a piano, and Gloria Gaynor

The prized possession you value above all others...

My family photo albums. My daughter Lauren, 29, has put together about 100 albums, in date order from when I was a child. They're an amazing record of my life, career and family.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...

Never learning to play the piano – except for Chopsticks.

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

I'd spend the morning in Cyprus with Lauren, my other daughter Bobbie, 16, son Louis, 20, and husband Mark. We've been going to the same place for 25 years and love it because it's so relaxed. Then Mark and I would have a cocktail and lunch at Venice's Hotel Danieli, followed by a gondola ride. After that I'd go to the Vatican to hear the Pope give a Mass in St Peter's Square, then have dinner with all the family at my favourite restaurant, Oslo Court in London's St John's Wood. Mark and I would end the night at Jimmy's club in Monte Carlo.

The temptation you wish you could resist...

Mature cheese – the smellier the better. But it packs on the pounds.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance...

Bette And Joan: The Divine Feud by Shaun Considine. It brings the glamour of old Hollywood to life and reveals the nasty jealousy behind Bette Davis and Joan Crawford's rivalry.

The priority activity if you were the invisible woman for a day...

I'd go into schools and destroy all the lice in children's hair. I'm appalled at how lax schools are.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...

Coming in from work and finding my kids have left the house like a tip.

The film you can watch time and time again...

Miracle On 34th Street from 1994 with Richard Attenborough. The whole family watches it every Christmas Eve. It makes me cry every time.

The person who has influenced you most...

The drama teacher Anna Scher. She was my English teacher when I was eight at school in Islington and opened a drama school for 10p a class. She changed my life. We're still in touch.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...

The women's rights activist Emmeline Pankhurst. Us women owe her a hell of a lot. I'd love to know how she overcame her fear to do what she did.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...

Respect others and you'll get respect in return.



'I was such a mad Donny Osmond fan I once saw him step on a KitKat wrapper and I kept it for decades!'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's actress Linda Robson's turn

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Computers. I resisted for years, then 18 months ago I did a free two-hour course in my local library and I've been hooked ever since.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A KitKat wrapper I saw Donny Osmond step on 40 years ago! I was such a mad fan. Someone threw it away when we last moved house. I met Donny in 2002 and told him about it. He must have thought I was a nutter.

The unending quest that drives you on... To maintain the freedom to choose what work I do. Mark and I aren't rich, but we're comfortably off – enough for me not to have to take any acting job. That's a lovely privilege.

The poem that touches your soul... Poetry and me don't really click because most of it goes over my head, but I love *The Black Cat Piddled In The White Cat's Eye* – when it's said by a very drunk Pauline Quirke!

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... People think I'm a bit dopey because Tracey in *Birds Of A Feather* was like that. But I'm actually streetwise and sharp and have never bottled out of anything.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Getting the job on *Birds Of A Feather* in 1989. Until then I was struggling to pay the bills, but that changed everything. Now new scripts are being written and the plan is to bring it back, which is very exciting.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... To pull an emergency stop lever on a fast intercity train just to see what it would be like.

The song that means most to you... Reet Petite (*The Sweetest Girl In Town*) by Jackie Wilson. My mum's name was Rita and that was her song. It was played at her funeral last August and I'll always smile – and cry – when I hear it.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Seeing my granddaughter Lila born last March. To witness that miracle of life was truly amazing.

The saddest time that shook your world... Losing my mum broke my heart. She was 75 and had dementia and cancer. I miss her so much.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To do a parachute jump. I'm determined to do one this year for Marie Curie Cancer Care.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Do I want it? Do I need it? Will I use it? I spend too much so that's my mantra before I buy anything.

The order of service at your funeral... I'll go out to *I Will Survive* by Gloria Gaynor and I'll leave enough money for a party. I've already bought the plot for my ashes next to my mum and dad in a cemetery in Finchley, north London.

The way you want to be remembered... As a loving and funny wife, friend, mother and grandmother.

The Plug... *The Birds Of A Feather* theatre tour continues from 26 February in Coventry. Visit www.birdsontour.com.

As told Rob McGibbon

PS...

Catch Golden Globe winner Jessica Chastain in Bin Laden film Zero Dark Thirty – in cinemas now. Book to see The Full Monty at Sheffield's Lyceum Theatre. And the 35th anniversary deluxe edition of Fleetwood Mac's Rumours is out on Monday



NEXT WEEK

- Behind the scenes on the new series of Danish political thriller *Borgen*
- Ben Fogle tackles the world's wildest adventure sports
- Celebrate Chinese New Year with Jamie Oliver
- PLUS Britain's best TV listings guide