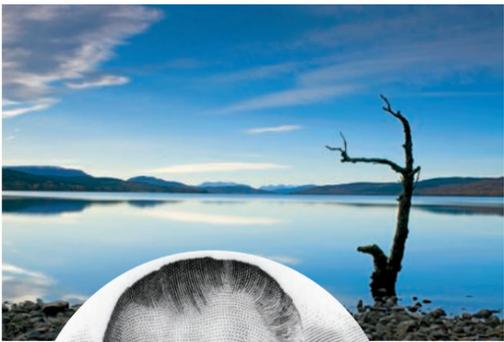


# WEDDING OF THE CENTURY



**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** I've lost part of a bronze statuette of Mozart that was left to me by a piano teacher who taught me as a schoolboy. Mozart is playing the fiddle and his beautiful little bow went missing in a house move. He stands on our bedroom mantelpiece and I miss the bow every day.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** Organising myself. I'll never be able to do it, but I try...

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no time-travel restrictions...** A dawn walk alongside a Highland loch with our dog. Lunch in the Oyster Bar at Grand Central Station – when New York is at its maddest and most alluring. The evening in Verona for a ramshackle opera in the Roman arena, then dinner outside with some perfect wine and my wife, Ellie. Bliss.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Talking too much. Maybe it's a lost cause, but it would be nice if, just for once, someone said to me, 'Wow – that was quick!'

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** Kidnapped by Robert Louis Stevenson brings back the excitement of childhood. The story of a lost inheritance and the Jacobite wars is made for boys. A ripping yarn.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** Lurking in the Cabinet room, but I suspect it would get tedious quite quickly, so I'd flit off to Chequers in the hope of catching David Cameron and Nick Clegg playing tennis.

**The way fame and fortune has changed you, for better and worse...** I can't talk on a bus without someone suggesting I sound like that funny guy from Today on the radio, so I have to be careful about what I say. But the ability to wake up every morning and help to write another front page is the best fun in the world.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Some Like It Hot. The Lemmon-Curtis-Monroe classic which I first saw more than 40 years ago.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My wife, Ellie, who is my most insightful critic, and on whom I rely for so much.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Lyndon B. Johnson, to talk about the political game. The most complicated of



Visiting the US as a student was an eye-opener. I saw enough from a Greyhound bus to last a lifetime

rose of Scotland/That smells sharp and sweet – and breaks the heart.'

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That it's possible to discern my political views by listening to Today. It isn't.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** My first trip to America as a student in 1970 was an eye-opener and a thrill. I saw enough from a Greyhound bus to last a lifetime. It was the start of an up-and-down love affair with the States.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** Bringing down every sports governing body in the world. I can't think of one that I wouldn't like to be replaced.

**The song that means most to you...** It will have to be Morgen, one of the Four Last Songs by Richard Strauss.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Aside from my wedding and the births of my three children, it is the day I first heard the presses rolling and smelt the ink at my first newspaper, The Press And Journal in Aberdeen. I was 23 and remember it still.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** The death of my father, when I was 22 in 1973. He probably wondered what I was going to do with my life. He was a village headmaster with a profound humanity that I loved more than I could adequately tell him.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** Skiing for a week and returning without a scratch.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** It's a new day.

**The order of service at your funeral...** A Scottish psalm, happy hymns, a bit of the Mozart Requiem and Handel, some Donne, Bunyan and an instruction to enjoy the aftermath with gusto.

**The way you want to be remembered...** I've always liked the epitaph, 'He didn't do much harm.'

**The Plug...** Radio 4 will catch every nuance of the Royal Wedding. It's the kind of event radio does best: words, words, words. Lovely!

As told to Rob McGibbon

## The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's Radio 4's James Naughtie

US presidents, he was a master plotter, and his stories would be classics.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** That your own instincts are almost always right.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Bees. I keep a hive and I've become a little obsessed. Apart from anything else, they're cleverer than we are.

**The prized possession that you value above all others...** Our new home in

Edinburgh, where we hope to be spending a lot more time.

**The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...** Forgetting what an old teacher told me at school: You can't take back the spoken word. On the radio... need I say there has been the odd thing I wish I hadn't said?!

**The poem that touches your soul...** Hugh MacDiarmid's The Little White Rose: 'The rose of all the world is not for me/I want for my part/Only the little white

A Scottish psalm, happy hymns, a bit of the Mozart Requiem and Handel, some Donne, Bunyan and an instruction to enjoy the aftermath with gusto.

**The way you want to be remembered...** I've always liked the epitaph, 'He didn't do much harm.'

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The things on James's mind (from top): a Highland loch, Lyndon B Johnson, Kidnapped, Mozart, Chequers, working on the radio, skiing, bees, and Marilyn Monroe



PS...

Helen Mirren stars in the remake of classic 1981 film Arthur, in cinemas now. Catch Ghost The Musical at Manchester Opera House before it transfers to London. And Jennifer Hudson releases new album I Remember Me on Monday



### NEXT WEEK

- Revealed: the softer side of Simon Cowell
- Classic barbecue recipes with a twist
- Great days out for the Bank Holiday weekend
- PLUS Don't miss Britain's biggest and most detailed TV listings guide