Emma Thompson wrote and stars in historical drama Effie Gray, in cinemas on Friday. Jane Horrocks appears in the comedy East Is East at London’s Trafalgar Studios from today. And Stevie Nicks’ new album 24 Karat Gold is out on Monday.

Next week
- Behind the scenes on television’s hottest new drama – The Great Fire
- Brilliant recipes from James Martin’s Saturday Kitchen
- David Attenborough’s amazing new wildlife series
- PLUS Britain’s best TV listings

The Definite Article

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s magician Paul Daniels.

The prized possession you value above all others... Two steel bowls that the British magician Robert Harbin used in a trick back in the 1940s. They were a gift, and they’re incredibly rare.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Checking Twitter and Facebook every morning when I should be getting on with work. It’s a big distraction, but I enjoy the interaction with people.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... John Northern Hilliard’s Greater Nanthomass of Bentleys. I threw away hundreds of thousands of pounds on flash cars in the 80s. I call it Clarkson Syndrome.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Wizard Of Oz. My dad Hughie was the projectionist at our local cinema in South Bank, near Middlesbrough. I was nine when I watched the film there and was amazed by it.

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The unending quest that drives you on... The pursuit of knowledge. But nobody likes a know-all, that’s why Debbie will never watch Eggheads with me.

The piece of wisdom you’d pass on to a child... Read as much as you can, and be sure to question everything you read.

The person who has influenced you most... My father. He could do everything from mending cars to electricity. He inspired me to mend and Mac King’s magic show. We’d then relax at La Chevre d’Or hotel in Eze, in the South of France. I’d have a glass of Sancerre on the terrace and watch the lights of the boats on the Mediterranean.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Pulling off a tough gig in the 90s. The audience were bankers aristocracy – people not known for laughing. But not long into the gig people were crying with laughter.

The saddest time that shook your world... The day my father died 20 years ago when he was 73. I miss him, but I talk to him all the time. I’ll be making something and I’ll say, ‘Come on Dad, how do I do this?’ And he’ll help me.

The order of service at your funeral... I’d like a service at the Prince of Wales Theatre in the West End, with friends telling lies about how much they loved me. I’d like my ashes to explode over the Thames in a firework.

The way you want to be remembered... As the only man who lived to see the end of the DFS Sale!

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The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To appear in a movie.

The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint... Stalin. I’d simply ask him why he murdered all those people.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I’d spend the day with my family including my three sons Gary, Paul and Martin, and my grandchildren. I’d have breakfast at the Magic Castle Hotel in Hollywood, then head to Disneyland followed by Knot’s Berry Farm, a theme park in California. Lunch would be in a Red Lobster restaurant in L.A, then we’d head to Universal Studios stopping off at the Bates mansion from Psycho. I’d pop back to London for double egg and chips with white bread and butter at the Windows Restaurant at the Hilton Hotel on Park Lane. In the evening, Debbie and I would check into The Venetian hotel in Las Vegas then go and see O by Cirque du Soleil and Mac King’s magic show. We’d then relax at La Chevre d’Or hotel in Eze, in the South of France. I’d have a glass of Sancerre on the terrace and watch the lights of the boats on the Mediterranean.

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The poem that touches your soul... I’m tickled by Ogden Nash’s work because of its silliness.

The song that means most to you... Handel’s Zadok The Priest. It was played at the event that altered the course of my life, and character.

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