

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week: *Bargain Hunt's Tim Wonnacott*



I was called a 'fur hag' for wearing a fur gilet on TV. But it was artificial – and cut from my mum's coat!

The prized possession you value above all others... A rare solid silver De La Rue Pelican pen from 1896 worth £2,000 which I bought at auction with a toast rack and a silver bowl for £600!

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not being a linguist. My children – Ben, 30, Alice, 27, and Freddie, 24 – are good at languages. Ben married an Italian girl, Federica, last year and I can barely communicate with her parents.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* is the most extraordinary book of the 20th century.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd spend a day alongside Tony Hall, director general of the BBC, to see how he manages 18,000 staff and billions of pounds.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Bad language. English has a rich vocabulary, so it makes me cross when people resort to 'Fs' and grunts.

Right: Michael Caine in *Zulu*. Above right: Chocolate. Far right: Hambleton Hall, Oakham, East Midlands



The temptation you wish you could resist... Chocolate.

The film you can watch time and time again... *Zulu* from 1964. It sums up heroism, and Michael Caine is brilliant.

The person who has influenced you most... My father, Raymond. He gave me a special rural upbringing in North Devon. He died aged 85 in 2009.

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

Joshua Slocum, the first man to sail solo around the world, in 1895. His book about his adventure enthralled me as a child.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Honour thy father and mother.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Gliding. I've been a passenger and it's thrilling and I must find time to become a pilot.

The unending quest that drives you on... To discover an object that's unloved, but through research is revealed to be priceless.



The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A white gold fob chain pendant from 1901. It belonged to the future King George V, but I lost it whilst giving a lecture. Then, two years ago, I found it inside the lining of a jacket!

The poem that touches your soul... I love singing *Jerusalem*, William Blake's extraordinary poem.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... A Twitter troll called me a 'fur hag' because he saw me wearing what he thought was a fur gilet on TV. It's artificial and cut from one of my mother's old coats!

The event that altered the course of your life and character... When my brother Paul was murdered by terrorists in Ceylon in 1971. I was 20 and he was 23 and had gone there on holiday. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time when the car he was travelling in was shot at in the jungle.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd invent a jamming device that neuters all speed cameras as I drive by.

The song that means most to you... *Love Is A Many-Splendored Thing*. I remember singing it around the piano every day whilst in Portugal on my first holiday abroad when I was 17.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd have a quintessentially English day, which would begin with breakfast in bed at home in West Sussex with my wife Helen. I'd have a boiled egg with toast and Marmite, and black coffee. We'd go walking in Rutland Water Nature Reserve in the East Midlands. Later we'd relax at Hambleton Hall, in nearby Oakham, a beautiful country house hotel. We'd have lunch there: Morecambe Bay potted shrimps, followed by extremely rare beef and fresh fruit and local cheese. I'd have fizzy water because I feel healthier not drinking alcohol. After another walk, we'd have afternoon tea at Langar Hall Hotel in Nottinghamshire. I'd have Darjeeling tea and a cheese scone with Colston Bassett blue cheese and quince. In the evening, our children and friends would join us for

dinner at The Ivy, in London. I'd opt for liver and bacon and Spotted Dick with custard. After, we'd stagger to Ronnie Scott's jazz club for some music.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... The moment Ben came out of a coma following a motorboat accident when he was five. He was hit badly on the back of the head and was on a life support machine for two days. The doctors turned his life support machine off to see if he could breathe on his own. At that moment, his eyes opened and he sat up and gasped in some air. Then he started breathing normally. He made a full recovery.

The saddest time that shook your world... Watching my daughter Alice play *The Last Post* on her trumpet at my father's graveside in Devon.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To make a TV series called *Wonnacott's Wonders*, in which I will travel the world discovering antiques associated with Britain.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Make the most of every day through hard work.

The order of service at your funeral... A small and traditional church service for family and friends. A few months later I'd like a jolly memorial service, followed by a big party.

The way you want to be remembered... As that nice antiques man off the telly!

The Plug... Bargain Hunt is on BBC1 every weekday at 12.15pm. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY; HAMBLETON HALL

PS...

Gemma Arterton stars in romantic comedy-drama Gemma Boverly, in cinemas Friday. Tony Award-winning musical Kinky Boots comes to the Adelphi on Friday. And Calvin Harris, Ellie Goulding and Sam Smith are just a few of the acts at V Festival, from Saturday.



NEXT WEEK

- The X Factor's back – what do Simon and Cheryl think of their new teammates?
- Hollywood's Stanley Tucci shares his family recipes
- PLUS Britain's biggest and best TV guide