

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's BBC Breakfast's Bill Turnbull



'People think I'm a toff because I went to Eton, but we were neither posh nor fabulously rich'

The prized possession you value above all others... An illustration of a smart young couple I found in a 1940s or 50s magazine about 30 years ago. It now hangs in our living room, and I tell people it's a picture of my first date with my wife Sesi.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... I wish I'd studied Classics. Instead I frittered away my time on a social sciences degree.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Cadbury's Dairy Milk With Oreo – I have a wicked sweet tooth.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Evelyn Waugh's *Sword Of Honour* trilogy, a satire based on his experiences in the Army. He was very witty.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd go to the Kremlin to work out exactly what Putin is up to.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Sloppy English. At work I've been nicknamed The Grammar Hammer!

Right: Henry Fonda and Claudia Cardinale in *Once Upon A Time In The West*. Above right: beekeeping. Far right: the Kremlin

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I've kept bees for 14 years. It's a fascinating hobby and it inspired my book *The Bad Beekeepers Club*.

The person who has influenced you most... My wife, who taught me how to do a decent job interview. Without her influence I might still be a down-the-desk reporter.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... William of Rule, a follower of Robert the Bruce in the 14th century – and my ancestor! It's said he was given our family name by Robert after saving his life by wrestling a rampaging bull.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Don't worry too much. Later on you'll wonder why you wasted so much energy.

The film you can watch time and time again... *Once Upon A Time In The West* with Henry Fonda and Claudia Cardinale. I love the haunting theme music.



The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... A cross on a chain that my wife gave me when I made a film about voodoo in Haiti. It got lost on my return.

The unending quest that drives you on... To keep supporting Wycombe Wanderers until they win the Champions League! It's a long road, as they're still in League Two.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... It annoys me that people think I'm a toff because I went to Eton. We were neither particularly posh, nor fabulously rich.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... My first job with Radio Clyde in Scotland in 1978. Two years' hard schooling on the streets of Glasgow made me a proper reporter.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... There's any number of dictators who could do with a bit of kidnapping and reinstruction.

The song that means most to you... I Have Dreamed from the film *The King And I*. My wife and I dance to it in the kitchen and it never fails to make us cry.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd begin with smoked salmon and caviar for breakfast in a log cabin by a fjord in Sweden with Sesi. My grandmother came from there, but I've never visited. After that we'd go to New York to watch baseball at the Yankee Stadium and have hot dogs with chilli fries for lunch. In the afternoon we'd take our two Labradors for a long walk at an English seaside because it's always a joy to watch them swim. Then we'd relax in a villa in Lunigiana, in north-west Tuscany, with our children Henry, Will and Flora, who are all in their 20s. We'd sip a local organic wine called Sfuso, which never gives you a hangover. In the evening Sesi and I would take friends to Puccini's *La Bohème* at Glyndebourne and have a picnic supper in the interval. The day would end with us floating on a boat on the River Alde in Suffolk.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Professionally, it was the day I got the job as

Washington correspondent for the BBC in 1994. I'd been trying to get a posting for years.

The saddest time that shook your world... 11 September 2001. I got a call from work telling me to turn on the TV and I realised we were witnessing the worst terrorist atrocity of our time. I felt numb, fearing life had changed irreversibly. Fortunately, somehow it hasn't.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I'd love to be part of the Test Match Special team. It's radio at its finest – engaging, entertaining and dramatic. I'd even make the tea!

The philosophy that underpins your life... Even if you don't believe in God, Christian principles aren't a bad way to conduct yourself.

The order of service at your funeral... I'd have the hymn *Dear Lord And Father Of Mankind* because it always made me blub at school, then a reading of *Philippians 4:8* and the *Desiderata* ('... in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.') It would end on something upbeat, like *Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer*.

The way you want to be remembered... As a half-decent broadcaster who brought a bit of light into people's lives.

The Plug... Please support *Bees For Development*, which helps people in the developing world escape poverty through beekeeping. beesfordevelopment.org. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: TIM STUBBINGS/WIREIMAGE.COM; SHUTTERSTOCK; ALLSTAR

PS...

Meryl Streep turns rock chick in Ricki And The Flash, in cinemas from Friday. A Lord Of The Flies revival begins at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre on Thursday before touring. And Foo Fighters play the first of three UK gigs at Milton Keynes Bowl on Saturday



NEXT WEEK

- A riveting history of crime in 100 extraordinary objects
- Ray Winstone takes us behind the scenes on his gritty new ex-con drama
- A second helping of meaty recipes from the Hairy Bikers
- PLUS Britain's best TV listings