

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's ex-ski jumper **Eddie the Eagle Edwards**

The prized possession you value above all others... My Olympic bibs. I wore No 24 at the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, Canada – one bib on the back and one on the front – and those are like my medals. I got there against the odds and they remind me of that achievement.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Losing nearly all the money I earned after the Olympics. I had more than £700,000, which was kept in a trust because I was an amateur, but my trustees messed up. I sued them and it was settled out of court, but I was left with only £100,000 after legal fees and everything else. It was a nightmare, but you live and learn.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... My legal books. I have 200, from getting my law degree in 2003 at De Montfort University in Leicester.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'm single, so it might be fun to go backstage at a Victoria's Secret fashion show!

Right: King Henry VIII. Above right: Chelsea buns. Far right: a helicopter over the mountains in France



The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Litter – I'm always picking up bagfuls and getting rid of it. I can't believe people throw it on the streets.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Chelsea buns from my local baker. I can easily eat two or three a day, but I keep fit so I don't get fat.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Don't get fixated on winning – there is glory in taking part. Aim high and do your best.

The film you can watch time and time again... Schindler's List – it's so powerful and shocking I cried for days after seeing it at the cinema.

The person who has influenced you most... My dad Terry, who's now 82. He gave me the courage to pursue my dreams.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... I'd ask Henry VIII what the hell was going on with his wives. His take on marriage would be interesting.



The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Dancing. I do modern jive five nights a week and I love it because it's so liberating.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My healthy right Achilles tendon. I injured it training for the London Marathon about 20 years ago – I wasn't able to compete and it's never been the same since.

The unending quest that drives you on... To always have a reason to get out of bed and enjoy life. I like keeping busy, whether it's working as a builder and plasterer, seeing my daughters – Otilie, 12, and Honey, nine – or doing PR work. I'm a positive person who likes to have fun and get the best out of every day.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm always the clown. I also have a serious side, and I often laugh as a way of coping with nerves. That's why I was always joking before I did my jumps.

The song that means most to you... Wings by Birdy. It's very moving and romantic and brings tears to my eyes.



'I'm not always a clown – I laugh as a way of coping with nerves, that's why I'd joke before my jumps'

ride in a helicopter to the top of a mountain to ski with some mates. For lunch I'd have a cheese and onion pasty from Greggs near my home in Stroud, Gloucestershire. Later I'd fly a plane as high as I could, then parachute down to Earth. In the evening I'd go to the cinema with my kids, then I'd go to Beijing for dinner – but I'd want a takeaway from England because I prefer our Chinese food! I'd spend the night at a hotel in Barbados, drinking cider with the girl of my dreams.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... The births of my two girls were wonderful – I felt proud to have helped bring new life into this world.

The saddest time that shook your world... When my wife Sam sat me down in March 2014 and said she wanted us to separate. I didn't see it coming and I was very depressed for 18 months. I still get bouts of depression, but things are much better now.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Never give up. Whenever anyone says I can't do something I always have to prove them wrong.

The order of service at your funeral... I just want to die in peace and have my body taken away for medical research.

The way you want to be remembered... As a great dad who did his best.

The Plug... My one-man theatre show tours the UK from May 2017. Booking information will be on my website eddie-the-eagle.co.uk soon. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Going on a school skiing trip to Italy when I was 13. I fell in love with the snow, the scenery and the speed. I was hooked.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd steal a girl's heart! I split up with my wife Sam in 2014 and we got divorced last October. I'm busy so I'm not lonely, but it would be nice to meet someone.

The poem that touches your soul... I've hated poetry ever since I was at school. I include Shakespeare in that. I don't understand the obsession with him!

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To swim with dolphins. They're serene and intelligent.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd kick off with a full English breakfast with a mug of tea on a beach in the Maldives and hang out with Otilie and Honey. I'd then go scuba diving on the Great Barrier Reef. We'd all go skiing in Courchevel, France, and after a few runs with the girls I'd



PS...

Jason Statham and Jessica Alba return in thriller *Mechanic: Resurrection* – in cinemas Friday. Britney Spears' new album *Glory* is out the same day. And Kenneth Branagh is *The Entertainer* at London's Garrick Theatre from today



NEXT WEEK

- Jenna Coleman on playing the young Queen Victoria in a lavish new series
- Delicious chicken and egg dishes from the Hairy Bikers' new book
- PLUS Britain's best TV guide