

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's TV adventurer Simon Reeve

**The prized possession you value above all others...** Oddly, it's my white plastic childhood sick bowl! My mum Cindy, who's 73 now, kept it for years and then gave it to me. It reminds me of being lovingly cared for. Now I use it when my son Jake, who's five, is ill.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Not ducking when a mate threw half a brick at me when I was 12. He was only mucking about but it hit me in the face and scraped my right eye. I'll never forget the agony of the doctors digging brick fragments out of my eye, and I've had to wear glasses and contact lenses ever since.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Watching rubbish TV late at night. I'm a sucker for action movies, but I don't need to watch Die Hard 3 again!

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Chopping wood. I live in a remote part of Dartmoor with my wife Anya and Jake and it's reassuring to have a woodpile to keep us warm in winter.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To see as much of the world as I can in the time I have left.

Right: General Patton. Above right: a pair of gerbils. Far right: Istanbul



**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** My pet gerbils Arthur and Terry – named after the characters in Minder – from when I was 12. I was devastated when they died.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** People using business lingo like 'blue sky thinking'. It's ridiculous.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** I'd get leadership tips from the US World War II commander General Patton. I can't organise my family!

**The film you can watch time and time again...** The Battle Of Algiers from 1966. It's so gritty and realistic you feel as if you're there.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My late grandma Lucy, who died in 2002 aged 81. She had polio when she was a child and needed a mobility car later in life, but nothing held her back. She used to take me and my brother James on mystery tours in that car and those trips sparked my adventurous streak.



**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...**

Get on the dance floor! I was too self-conscious when I was younger, so I was on the sidelines of life. My wish for Jake is that he's a happy kid who dances.

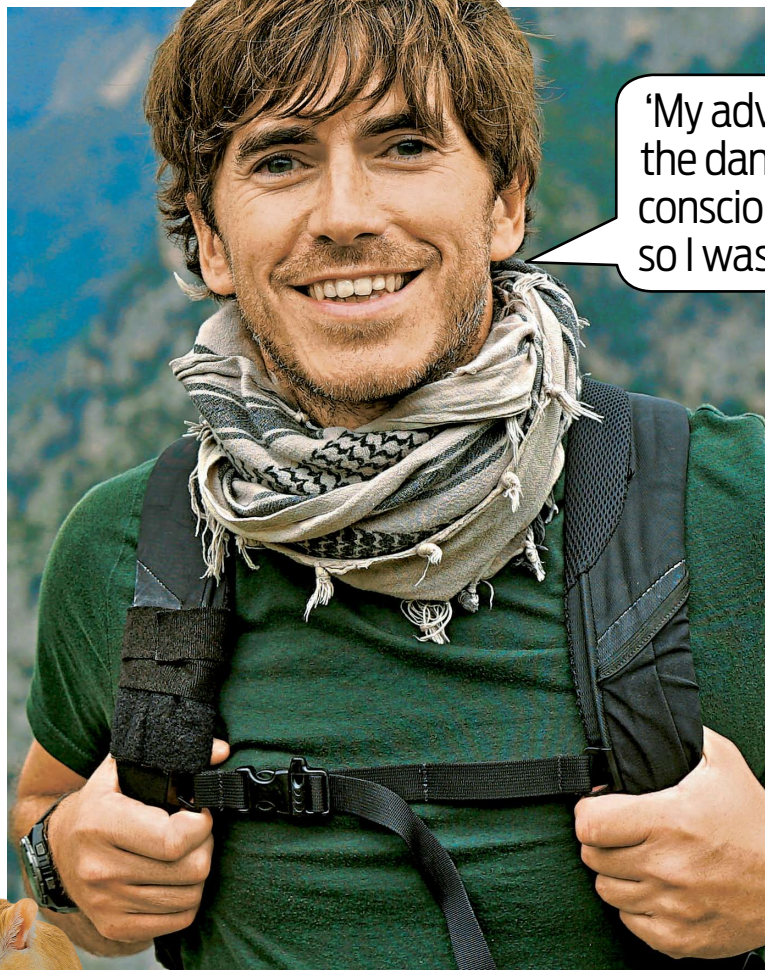
**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'd visit Turkmenistan, as I was denied entry there in 2003 when I was filming my series Meet The Stans, in which I visited the other four Central Asian republics.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** Schindler's Ark by Thomas Keneally [which was adapted into the film Schindler's List]. It made me realise true evil existed in the world.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd kidnap a few nasty dictators and give them some firm re-education treatment.

**The song that means most to you...** Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life from Monty Python's Life Of Brian should be on the school curriculum. We should all feel positive.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Get out there and find purpose.



'My advice to children? Get on the dance floor! I was too self-conscious when I was younger, so I was on the sidelines of life'

have a pint of Guinness in our local The Horse, then a walk on Dartmoor with the family to see the sunset.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Finding my brother James after he got lost during the Harrods sale when I was nine and he was seven. Someone said they'd seen him walk off with a man, which scared me. I found him 15 minutes later and I've never felt such a rush of relief.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** My dad Alan's death from cancer in 2001 aged 68. He died in my arms and the memory is imprinted on my mind. I still miss him all the time.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To learn another language. It's shameful that I've been to 120 countries with just English. I always have a translator with me!

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'd like to be buried on a Devon hill with a beautiful view.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As a great dad.

**The Plug...** Simon is the ambassador for the Mountain Warehouse Charity Challenge 2016, which raises £10,000 for the winner's chosen charity. Visit [mountainwarehouse.com/competitions/charity](http://mountainwarehouse.com/competitions/charity). ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

**The poem that touches your soul...** I'm not mad about poetry, but I really connect with this quote from the philosopher Bertrand Russell: 'Three passions govern my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind.'

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** It rankles that people think I'm a posh public schoolboy. I went to my local comp.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** 9/11. My book about Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, The New Jackals, had been ignored when it came out in 1998. After the attack every TV station wanted to talk to me and it ultimately led to my first BBC travel programme two years later.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** The day would begin with Anya, Jake and our dog Obi on the Greek island of Symi. I'd have breakfast at a cafe in the harbour – fried eggs on toast and Greek yoghurt with honey. For lunch we'd go to Istanbul, my favourite city, and have lamb – Obi would get the bone! Jake's obsessed with space so after lunch I'd take him in a rocket to zoom through the stars. After that I'd



## PS...

Kristen Stewart stars in Woody Allen's *Café Society* – in cinemas from Friday. *Pride And Prejudice* is at London's Regent's Park Open Air Theatre from Friday. And Mark Ronson and Kaiser Chiefs headline *The Big Festival in the Cotswolds* this weekend



## NEXT WEEK

- Great British Menu serves up its secrets
- Part one of Matthew Jukes' ultimate guide to English wine
- Monty Don on how to grow perfect beans
- Britain's best TV guide