

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's Eggheads presenter Jeremy Vine*

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My Dansette record player, which I bought three years ago. I love it because it takes me back to my teenage years when I listened to music endlessly in my bedroom.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** That I've never written a great novel. I wrote two comic novels a long time ago, which weren't very good.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Twitter. I'm on it so often my mobile phone operator keeps telling me I've used up my data allowance!

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** The Collected Shorter Poems of WH Auden. The journalist in me likes the precision of his writing.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'd shadow the Queen. I've never met her, but she fascinates me. I remember being dragged by my parents to The Mall for the Silver Jubilee in 1977 when I was 12 and seeing her wave back at me!

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Buses that overtake me when I'm cycling, then immediately pull over. It's so dangerous.

Right: Anne Boleyn.  
Above right: a Dansette record player. Far right: Grand Teton in the US

**The film you can watch time and time again...** The thriller Memento starring Guy Pearce. It's dark and original and I always notice something new.

**The person who has influenced you most...** Geoff Grimmer, my boss when I was a trainee reporter on the Coventry Evening Telegraph. I was 21 and wide-eyed with excitement. He'd go through every line of my copy and taught me so much. Sadly, he died about 15 years ago.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Birds. I'm not exactly a twitcher, but four years ago while watching sandpipers at the London Wetland Centre I suddenly realised that bird watching is quite magical.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Don't worry about being first. Just enjoy what you're doing.

**The poem that touches your soul...** The Portrait by Stanley Kunitz, about his father's suicide. It's astonishing.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Anne Boleyn. I'd tell her not to worry about Henry, or her execution, because her daughter Elizabeth would become one of the greatest monarchs ever.



**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...**

That I'm always serious, which probably comes from doing Newsnight and Panorama. I love to laugh.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** The tape recordings of songs my brother [comedian Tim Vine] and I wrote and sang when we were about 13. They were all thrown out somewhere along the way.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To understand what Van Morrison is trying to tell us in his music! He's great but I just can't make sense of it.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** When I suddenly realised I was driving on the wrong side of a mountain road in Sicily on holiday in 2004. I was zooming past a car when it dawned on me. It still makes my blood run cold, but also reminds me how lucky I am.

**The song that means most to you...** Half A Person by The Smiths. I connected with the feeling of bedsit angst when I was at Durham University.



'I wish I could fake my death like the canoe man John Darwin so I could glimpse the world without "existing" for a while'

biscuits. In the evening I'd see the punk band Theatre of Hate play a small venue. The day would end with the family glamping at Mellon Udrigle in the Highlands, a truly stunning place.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** The collapse of the Cleddau Bridge in Wales in 1970, in which four men died. My grandfather Harry was in charge of construction and, even though I was only five, I vividly recall him phoning to tell my parents what had happened. It was the first time death had come into my life.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To know the order of the kings and queens of England without pausing to think. It comes up on Eggheads the whole time, but I still can't answer the basic ones, like was George I before or after Edward II!

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Keep dancing. Doing Strictly in 2015 taught me it's always good to try new things – even if you're no good!

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'd be happy with a traditional Anglican service followed by some nice sandwiches. But I'd quite like the vicar to mess up his speech and reveal that he didn't really know me at all!

**The way you want to be remembered...** As a kind person.

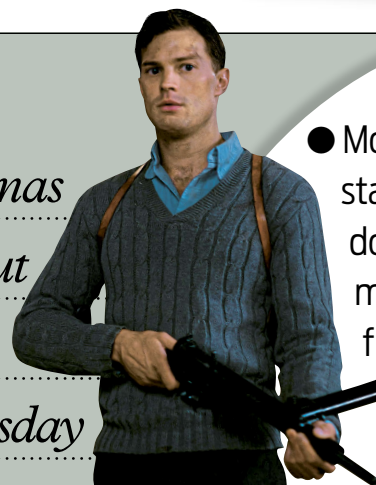
**The Plug...** Jeremy co-hosts Crimewatch weekly from this Monday at 9pm on BBC1, and will present Radio 2 Live in Hyde Park on Sunday 11 September. ■

*As told to Rob McGibbon*



## PS...

*Jamie Dornan plays a WWII soldier in Anthropoid, in cinemas Friday. Meat Loaf's new album, Braver Than We Are, is out the same day. And Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart join forces in No Man's Land at Wyndham's Theatre from Wednesday*



## NEXT WEEK

- Monty Don on the real TV star in his family, Nigel the dog
- Brilliant cakes and mouthwatering meals from Bake Off winner John Whaite
- PLUS Britain's best TV guide