

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's *Cold Feet* actor Robert Bathurst

The prized possession you value above all others... My collection of cards for birthdays and first nights, hand-painted by my wife and children. I have 30 going back 15 years. They're a wonderful chronology of a period in my life.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Playing rugby as a child. I got my first injury at nine and continued to get mashed up until my knee got hurt at 18. I still get twinges now – I'd have been better off doing library duty.

The person who has influenced you most... My wife [artist Victoria Threlfall], but I'd rather not say how. It must remain private.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... A Scattering by Christopher Reid, a narrative in verse about the death of his wife. He expresses his feelings in the most beautiful language. I developed it for a stage show called Love, Loss And Chianti at last year's Chichester Festival.

The unending quest that drives you on... To stage Love, Loss And Chianti in the West End. I hope to get a theatre for autumn next year.

Right: Ken Dodd.
Above right:
Daim bars.
Far right: a
steamer
cargo ship



The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd listen to the Pope in confession. I'm intrigued to know what he's been up to, but I expect he has the most pathetic sins.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Daim bars. And now they've made Daim ice cream too, which is just cruel.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... The plastic flotsam that washes up on the shores of the world. It shows how we treat our oceans as a dumping ground.

The film you can watch time and time again... An Englishman Abroad, a TV movie from 1983 starring Alan Bates as the spy Guy Burgess. It's delicious in every detail.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Lenin. I'd like to know if he thought Stalin mucked up his Bolshevik revolution.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Look out, not in. Be interested in others, not self-obsessed. Look at the universe, both physically and spiritually.



'People often think I'm a strait-laced emotional retard like many characters I play. I'm sharper and more critical than people expect'



The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... National Hunt jump racing. I love the language and the stories – and the fact a jockey expects to fall once every 13 races, largely for our entertainment!

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... The £3 I lost in a pyramid scheme at school aged 13. It was a fortune to me then and I expected a huge return. It taught me never to expect something for nothing.

The poem that touches your soul... I love the lyrics to songs by the rock group Half Man Half Biscuit, especially 24 Hour Garage People. I put on their music loud when I'm feeling low – they're so funny it cheers me up.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm a strait-laced emotional retard like many characters I play. I'm a lot sharper and critical than people might expect.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Meeting Victoria through friends in 1982. We married in 1985. Meeting her was the end of loneliness. That's as much as I'll say.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd break into the BBC and play the tapes to Joking Apart, a comedy series I did in the early 90s, written by Steven Moffat. It deserves to be seen again!

The song that means most to you... Per la Gloria d'Adorarvi (For The Glory Of Adoring You) by Bononcini. I learnt it years ago when I had singing lessons and I sang it to Victoria when we were in Italy a year before our wedding.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd divide the day into three eight-hour sections. The first would be spent on an old-fashioned steamer cargo ship sailing across the Southern Ocean

from Cape Town to Australia. I love old boats and I would enjoy being out on the wide ocean, although I expect I'd get sick. I'd then be airlifted off and dropped in Lochaline in North West Scotland, where I'd be joined by Victoria and our four girls – Matilda, Clemency, Oriel and Honor, who are in their teens and 20s. It would be a beautiful

October day and we'd have a picnic by the loch and spend the afternoon watching otters. We'd spend the rest of the day on a train through India. We'd take our chances and buy dinner off one of the itinerant vendors, then end up at a secret beach I know in Kerala.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... A family holiday to Goa, India, at Christmas 2004. I rarely get family holidays because my work mucks it up, but everything worked out on this trip. It was so much fun.

The saddest time that shook your world... My parents Gillian and Philip died within a month of each other in 2009. They were in their 80s, but it was still a hideous time.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To be a good gardener – I don't have the touch. Maybe I'll crack it in my dotage.

The philosophy that underpins your life... You are dust, and to dust you shall return. We are a mere speck and only here for a blip, so do not worry.

The order of service at your funeral... Some crying would be good, then they can play Tears (For Souvenirs) by Ken Dodd. Maybe they can scatter my ashes a few miles out to sea from Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex.

The way you want to be remembered... I'm not bothered about a legacy.

The Plug... Cold Feet is on Mondays at 9pm on ITV. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PS...

Gemma Arterton stars in futuristic thriller *The Girl With All The Gifts*, in cinemas Friday. Dominic Cooper is back on stage in *The Libertine* at Theatre Royal Haymarket from Thursday. And Bruce Springsteen's album *Chapter And Verse* is out on Friday



NEXT WEEK

- Behind-the-scenes secrets from TV's riveting Victoria
- Part two of our brilliant Bake Off recipe series
- Monty Don's tips for taking plant cuttings
- Britain's best TV guide