

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's Olympic legend Dame Kelly Holmes

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My 12 running medals, including my three Olympics medals – bronze for 800m in Sydney 2000 and golds for 800m and 1500m in Athens 2004. I see them all as one because they each have a story that represents every tear, injury and success.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** I wish I hadn't suffered certain injuries because I think I could have won more golds.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Green & Black's dark chocolate. My coach only allowed me chocolate once a week and only if I'd run well, so it's great to be able to have it when I want now.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** The Celestine Prophecy by James Redfield. I connected with the sense that unexpected things happen in your life that make dreams come true.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...** I'd love to hear what the Obamas say about Donald Trump in private!

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Snoring. I was on a plane once and a man was snoring so badly that I rolled up a piece of paper and threw it at him – but it went in his mouth. He woke up choking and I had to hide.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** The Shawshank Redemption, I've seen it at least 25 times. The twist at the end is so clever.

**The person who has influenced you most...** Debbie Page, my PE teacher when I was 12 in Tonbridge, Kent. She saw my potential and cajoled me into doing a cross-country race. I came second and I was thrilled. We're still friends.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Margaret Thatcher. She was a strong, charismatic woman who made so many changes. I'd ask her what she *really* thinks of Theresa May.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Be the best you can be and never give up on your dreams.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To keep learning and to inspire people, especially children.



'I was so moved by a Mrs T quote from The Iron Lady film, "What we think, we become," I had it tattooed on my bicep'



**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...**

Building work. In 2013, I bought the newsagents where I worked as a teenager and rebuilt it into a cafe called

Cafe 1809, after my Athens running number. I was the project manager and I did loads of jobs, even plastering.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** A beautiful Boodles diamond ring worth about £7,000. It went missing five years ago.

**The poem that touches your soul...** I was moved by a Mrs Thatcher quote from the film The Iron Lady in 2011. I had part of it tattooed on my bicep: 'What we think, we become.'

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I must be good at all types of sports. I'm not great at long-distance running and my swimming is pretty rubbish!

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** When a friend died in 2005 within three weeks of being diagnosed with an illness, it made me decide to retire and get on with the next stage of my life.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...**

I'd rob the Bank of England and give the money to children's charities and the underprivileged. I might keep a bit, too!

**The song that means most to you...** If I Ain't Got You by Alicia Keys. That was my song of the Olympics 2004. I was even singing it out loud when I was warming up on the track.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...**

I'd take a bunch of mates with me all day and we'd start off in Sydney. I was there for the Olympics in 2000, but I didn't get to see much of it. I'd have a vegetable smoothie for breakfast while sitting in the sun by the harbour. We'd see some sights before going to Rome for some culture and a pasta lunch. We'd spend a few hours shopping in New York and I'd go for a run in Central Park. Later we'd head to the mountains in South Africa's Stellenbosch area, where I used to train, for a tasting at JC Le Roux winery, where they match sparkling

wines with chocolate. Dinner would be at JW Steakhouse at the Grosvenor House hotel in London. The steaks are amazing and I love their vanilla cheesecake. In the evening we'd see a West End show, then I'd crash out in one of the Grosvenor's best suites.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Winning Olympic gold in the 1500m, which had been my dream for more than 20 years.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** Now is a sad time because my mum, Pam, is very ill with myeloma – blood and bone cancer – which is incurable. She's only 63.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To win the Veuve Clicquot Business Woman of the Year Award. I presented it in 2011 and remember thinking, 'One day I'll be back to collect this!'

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** You live every day. You only die once.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I want If I Ain't Got You and Angel by Sarah McLachlan, but I also want it to be upbeat with motivational quotes. My life will be over, but get on with yours!

**The way you want to be remembered...** She strived to do her best and inspired others.

**The Plug...** Kelly supports the charity Myeloma UK. Donate at myeloma.org.uk. Visit Cafe 1809 in Hildenborough, Kent, cafe1809.co.uk. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



Right: Margaret Thatcher. Above right: Kelly's medals. Far right: a Sydney morning



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