

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

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

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My 'Sexiest Newsreader of All Time' award from The Sun newspaper in 2008. It's just a newspaper cutting, but it makes me smile!

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** I wish I'd kept a diary while I was a foreign correspondent. I'm trying to write a book about my life on the road, but my memory is shot to pieces.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Wine. Good or indifferent, I seem to drink it with worrying ease.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** The Quiet American by Graham Greene. I first read it in my teens and I was gripped by its story about a foreign correspondent in Asia.

**The priority activity if you were the invisible man for a day...** I'd travel in the places journalists can't easily go, like North Korea and China, and listen to Putin's phone calls with Trump.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Poor service in restaurants, and wobbly tables.

Right: Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid. Above right: drums and cricket. Far right: Llandudno beach

**The person who has influenced you most...** The BBC foreign correspondent Brian Barron. Watching him on TV made me think, 'That's what I want to do.' I ended up working against him for ITV in Asia, but he never knew I was in awe of him. He died in 2009.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** I've seen Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid so many times I can recite the dialogue.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** I'd chat with Muhammad Ali after the Rumble in the Jungle in 1974. I'd have pleaded with him to stop fighting. He had nothing left to prove.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** In life you need to get stuck in to reap the rewards. Don't languish on the sidelines.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Drumming. I was taught from the age of 14 and I still love it.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To play cricket for England and be a drummer in a successful rock band. The first is now impossible, the second is highly unlikely.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** A Viv Richards T-shirt I bought in Antigua after witnessing the fastest ever Test century in 1986. I wore that T-shirt for ten years until it finally fell apart.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd kidnap Lionel Messi and force him to play for Chelsea.

**The song that means most to you...** Waiting On A Friend by the Rolling Stones. It reminds me of a place and time many years ago – but I'm not going there, so don't ask why!

**The poem that touches your soul...** I like the hymn Father Hear The Prayer We Offer: 'Not forever by still waters/ Would we idly rest and stay/ But would smite the living fountains/ From the rocks along our way.'

'I always wanted to play cricket for England and be in a rock band. The first is now impossible, the second highly unlikely'

Downs National Park, West Sussex. I'd have a Bloody Mary mixed by my mate Henry at the Noah's Ark pub in nearby Lurgashall, then a round of golf at Kingsbarns in Scotland with my son, where I'd get a hole in one on the Par 3 15th. I'd have lamb and a Tuscan red for dinner with the family at Riva in Barnes, south-west London, then watch the sunset at Llandudno beach, Cape Town, before listening to Miles Davis and John Coltrane play at Smalls Jazz Club in New York.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Nothing beats the births of your children, but it was pretty special to be in South Africa when millions of black people voted for the first time and banished apartheid.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** When one of my daughters recently became ill with anorexia. I thought we were going to lose her.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Accept what is, let go of what was and have faith in what will be.

**The order of service at your funeral...** Sorry, but my children won't let me answer this question!

**The way you want to be remembered...** As the exceptional cricketer and top rock drummer I wasn't.

**The Plug...** Please support the Place2be charity, which helps children with mental health issues. Visit [place2be.org.uk](http://place2be.org.uk). (And look out for my book... if I ever write it!). ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



## PS...

Natalie Portman plays JFK's wife in Jackie – in cinemas Friday.

Mike Oldfield's new album Return To Ommadawn is out the same day. And Strictly dancer Joanne Clifton stars in Thoroughly Modern Millie at the New Wimbledon Theatre from Tuesday



## NEXT WEEK

- Rochelle Humes on her hit show Ninja Warrior UK
- Tom Kerridge serves up a second helping of his delicious Dopamine Diet dishes ● PLUS Britain's best TV listings