

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

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

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My grandmother Christina's gold and diamond wedding ring. She died in her late 70s following a car accident when I was 16. The ring was too big for me, so I had it re-designed, but it still connects me to her.

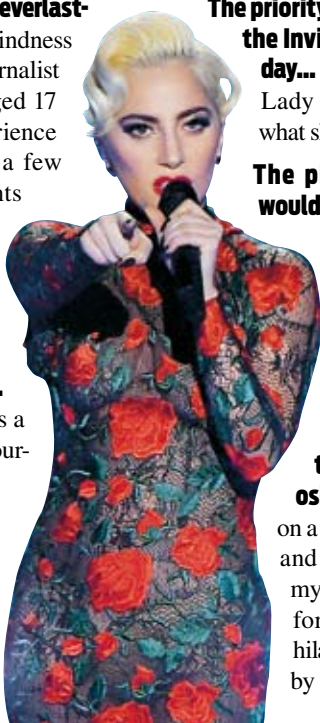
**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Not buying the London flat I was renting for the £250,000 asking price in 2010. I couldn't afford it but five years later it sold for £580,000.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Haribo sweets and red wine – together! It may sound like a disgusting combination, but it works for me.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** The Kindness Of Strangers by the journalist Kate Adie. I read it aged 17 during my work experience in local TV. I'd had a few Bridget Jones moments but Adie inspired me to stick with it – she was so human about her mistakes.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My dad Richard, who's a farmer. He always encouraged me to be brave.

Right: Lady Gaga. Above right: a tutu and ballet shoes. Far right: a restaurant in the Alps



**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** People who don't pick up their dogs' poo. I've got a sausage dog/red setter cross called Barney and thoughtless owners give the rest of us a bad name.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Pearl Harbor with Kate Beckinsale. My friends say it's cheesy, but I think it's a great love story.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** JFK. I'd ask if he really had an affair with Marilyn Monroe.

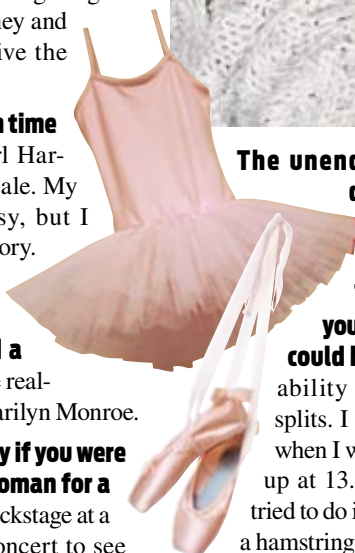
**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...** I'd go backstage at a Lady Gaga concert to see what she's really like.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** To a girl I'd say don't dye your hair – it opens up a can of worms. To a boy: leave stacking the dishwasher to your wife!

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Cows! I grew up on a dairy farm in Cumbria and I used to love putting my hand in their mouths for them to suck it. It's hilarious, like being licked by sandpaper in a vice.



'On our farm I used to put my hand in the cows' mouths for them to suck it. It's like being licked by sandpaper in a vice'



**The unending quest that drives you on...** To get the most out of every day.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** The ability to jump into the splits. I was good at ballet when I was young, but gave up at 13. When I was 19 I tried to do it at a party and tore a hamstring, which was agony.

**The poem that touches your soul...** The Owl And The Pussycat by Edward Lear – it reminds me of my mum Janet reading it to me as a child.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I must be thick because I did Blue Peter. Children's TV presenters don't get enough credit. I trained as a journalist and I'm not afraid to ask questions.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Running the Namibia Ultra Marathon race for Blue Peter in 2009. It was three marathons across the desert in 24 hours and at times I thought I was going to die, but I finished. Becoming the show's action girl led to many amazing experiences.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd raid Hamleys toy shop in London and leave hundreds of random presents on doorsteps for kids all over the country.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I'd start the day skiing in the Alps with friends, stopping off for a champagne breakfast at a mountain restaurant. Then I'd join my husband Richie [Super League rugby player Richie Myler] and our son Ernie, who's nearly 18 months old, on the beach near our home in Perpignan in the South of France. We live there while Richie is playing for Catalan Dragons. We'd have tapas and fish for lunch. Thanks to my time on Blue Peter I like crazy adventures, so then I'd do a HALO (High Altitude Low Opening) parachute jump from 30,000ft. I'd land on a yacht that would be packed with all my friends and family and we'd sail around Ibiza. I'd then spend the evening with Richie and Ernie wandering around Barcelona before relaxing in the jacuzzi on the roof of a

luxury hotel with a glass of red wine – and some Haribos!

**The song that means most to you...** Teenage Dream by Katy Perry is a special song for Richie and me. Our friend, the soprano Laura Wright, sang it at our wedding in 2013.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** When I saw Ernie walk for the first time last May, when he was 11 months old. He ran across the living room and I was crazy with pride.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** The death of my cousin Kate at the age of 27 in 2009 when she was knocked off her bike in Leeds. We grew up together and were very close.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** Giving up ballet before I could dance *en pointe*, because I thought I looked too fat in a leotard.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Laugh every day.

**The order of service at your funeral...** We'd start with Oh Happy Day from the film Sister Act, then I'd like live music and a stand-up comedian. I want my ashes scattered on Ullswater in the Lake District, where I spent happy times growing up.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As someone who made people feel good.

**The Plug...** Helen is an ambassador for Mummy Social, the social networking site helping new mums battle depression. Visit [mummysocial.com](http://mummysocial.com). ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PS...

Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone pair up in musical *La La Land* – in cinemas Friday. Rick Wakeman's new album *Piano Portraits* is out the same day. And *The Kite Runner* will open at London's Wyndham's Theatre on Tuesday



**NEXT WEEK**

- Check in to the First Dates Hotel in the South of France with host Fred Sirieix
- Monty Don sings the praises of the wonderful winter vegetable kale
- Britain's best TV guide