

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's Olympic triathlete Alistair Brownlee

The prized possession you value above all others... My health and my two Olympic gold medals – for London 2012 and Rio last year. I keep them in my sock drawer or a safe, depending on how organised I am.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Running in the World Series in 2013 when my left ankle was already injured. It was a cold day in London and the joint ended up really knackered, which set me back six months and resulted in surgery in 2015. I was lucky to be fit for Rio.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Chocolate, especially Dairy Milk. I'm lucky because I don't have to watch what I eat. I train for 35 hours a week and burn it all off.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Gregory David Roberts's novel *Shantaram*, about an Aussie bank robber who escapes prison and hides in India. It's full of drama and philosophy.

Right: Macaulay Culkin in *Home Alone*. Above right: Black Sheep beer. Far right: Alistair carrying Jonny over the line at the Triathlon World Series last year



The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd find out how much Putin knows about doping in Russian sport.

The film you can watch time and time again... *Home Alone*. I first saw it aged nine and spent ages trying to devise traps like Kevin – to catch out my parents and two brothers [Jonny, 26, and Ed, 21].

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... William Wilberforce, a fine Yorkshireman like me! I'd love to know how he managed to maintain his determination to abolish slavery in the face of so much opposition.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Being beaten by Jonny at Monopoly. It should be fun but I still like to win. He beats me several times a year at triathlon now – it's happening more and more.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... The fitness of my youth. I'm only 28 but exercise is already getting tougher. I also wish I had all the hundreds of medals and cups I've won since I was a boy. So many have gone missing over the years.



The person who has influenced you most... My father Keith. He took me everywhere for my running when I was a child without ever complaining. And my brother Jonny is very important. We're super-competitive but always look out for each other, like when I carried him over the line in Mexico last year.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Enjoy what you do for a living and you'll never have to do a day's work in your life.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Steam engines. My dad even bought me a big model engine this Christmas.

The unending quest that drives you on... To keep pushing myself to my limit. I enjoy hurting myself in training because it's the only way you improve.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Leaving Cambridge after one term of a medicine degree so I could focus on triathlon. It had taken so much to get there,

but a month before I started I won the World Junior title and I knew I had to pursue the sport full-time. I took a different degree at Leeds because it was closer to the training facilities I needed.

The poem that touches your soul... If by Rudyard Kipling. My headmaster used to read it to the school at the end of every year and it struck a nerve.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm stand-offish. I'm really friendly, but I think my shyness can be misread.

The song that means most to you... *Wonderwall* by Oasis takes me back to my teenage years and lifts my spirits.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd borrow the Flying Scotsman steam engine and drive it from London to Edinburgh.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd start at my parents' cottage in the Yorkshire Dales with my girlfriend Alex. I'd have a bacon sarnie and a mug of tea. We'd head out for a long

'I hate being beaten by my brother Jonny, even at Monopoly. It should be fun but I still like to win'

walk and I'd fit in a bit of running. We'd stop at a cafe for lunch, then I'd cycle in the Lake District before skiing in St Moritz with my brothers and some mates. I'd also toboggan down the Cresta Run, which would be a big thrill. We'd watch the sunset from the summit of Great Whernside in the Dales and I'd end the day in a local pub with friends and family for some Black Sheep beer and a steak and ale pie with chips.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Winning Olympic gold in Rio was beyond my dreams. I was proud but also relieved it was all over.

The saddest time that shook your world... My grandma Grace's death from cancer in 2014. She was lovely.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... Never finishing my medicine degree.

The philosophy that underpins your life... He who dares wins – but only take calculated risks.

The order of service at your funeral... I'd just like my family and friends to burn me on a bonfire on Great Whernside then scatter my ashes at the summit.

The way you want to be remembered... As a kind and respectful person who was also a fierce competitor.

The Plug... Alistair supports Get Set To Eat Fresh, the British Olympic Association and supermarket Aldi's schools' programme to teach children aged five to 14 the importance of healthy eating. Visit getsetatefresh.co.uk. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PS...

Oscar-nominated Fences, with Viola Davis and Denzel Washington, is in cinemas Friday. Mark Gatiss opens in The Boys In The Band at London's Vaudeville Theatre on Tuesday. And Green Day's UK tour starts in Leeds tomorrow



NEXT WEEK

- Behind the scenes on *Fortitude* with Sofie Grabol
- Tom Kerridge's perfect Valentine's Day supper
- Monty Don says plant a rose for your sweetheart
- Britain's best TV guide