

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's *ITV* newsreader **Julie Etchingam**

The prized possession you value above all others... A pillow with a speaker inside, which my husband Nick gave me. I have insomnia, so when I wake up at 3am I can listen to the World Service without disturbing him for an hour and a half until I drop off again.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Diary Of A Young Girl by Anne Frank which I read when I was ten. I wrote a diary from the age of six to 21, so it had a deep impact on me.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Giving unsolicited advice and drinking white wine – especially both combined!

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Tangled wires behind TVs or computers. I have to sort them out.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Pink Panther movies – Peter Sellers and Herbert Lom still make me howl with laughter.

Right: Peter Sellers as Inspector Clouseau in *The Return Of The Pink Panther*. Above right: ballet shoes. Far right: a view of Rome and ice-cream cones



The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Giving up ballet when I had glandular fever at the age of 16. I wouldn't have made it as a ballerina, but it's such a joy to dance.

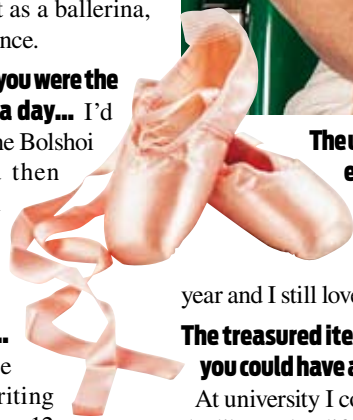
The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd watch the dancers of the Bolshoi Ballet rehearse and then stand beside them on stage during a major performance.

The person who has influenced you most... My mum Sheila. She saw my love of writing and said when I was 12

or 13, 'Maybe you'd like to be a journalist?' I thought, 'That's it!' If it wasn't for her I might not be doing what I do now.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Don't bother about selfies – look beyond yourself and concentrate on putting other people in the frame.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... I'm intrigued by Elizabeth I – she had such an extraordinary life. She used to say, 'I see, and say nothing' – the journalist in me wants to find out who she really was under the make-up.



The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I taught English near Dusseldorf during my gap year and I still love all things German.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... Head space. At university I could spend all day in the library, but life's so busy these days that I find myself longing for solitude.

The poem that touches your soul... I Love Digging by Seamus Heaney, which is about heritage. It makes me contemplate where I've come from.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That because I appear on TV I must be happy to stand up and talk in front of a crowd. In fact I find it nerve-racking.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Going to Cambridge to study English after my teacher Michael Sweeney suggested I go for it. The experience was extraordinary and literally changed my life.

The unending quest that drives you on... Curiosity. It's my job to remain curious and it never ends – there's a constant search for answers.



'People think because I appear on TV I'll be happy to talk in front of a crowd, but in fact I find it nerve-racking'

The song that means most to you... Bridge Over Troubled Water by Simon and Garfunkel. It was playing in the delivery room when Leo wriggled out during the Caesarean. I still can't hear it without crying.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... The surprise ride in a hot-air balloon over the Leicestershire countryside that Nick organised during our wedding day in 1997. We had an hour together, which was heaven.

The saddest time that shook your world... I'm blessed not to have suffered a life tragedy yet. I've seen a lot of sadness as a journalist, especially in Thailand after the 2004 tsunami, but that's different to a personal sadness.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I'd love to go to Australia and India – and to finish the pile of books by my bed.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

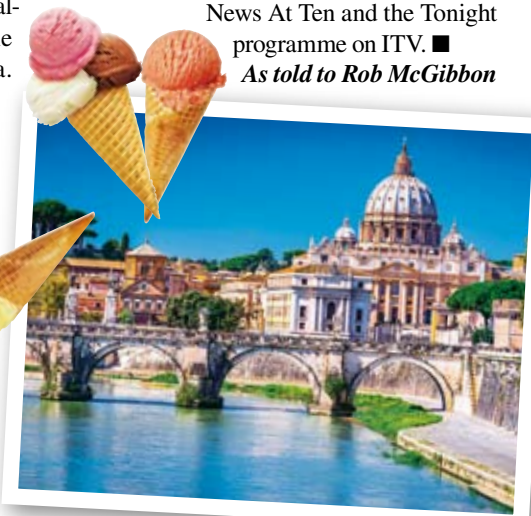
The order of service at your funeral... I'd have a Catholic service, including my grandfather's favourite hymn, Soul Of My Saviour. I'd then like a raucous wake with plenty of Blondie, The Boomtown Rats and The Jam.

The way you want to be remembered... She gave it her best shot.

The Plug... Julie Etchingam presents News At Ten and the Tonight programme on *ITV*. ■
As told to Rob McGibbon

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd visit the National Gallery and the British Museum at night so I could feast on all the riches without anyone else around.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd begin with a long walk on Waxham Beach, Norfolk with Nick and our sons – Leo, 14, and James, 11. We'd then cruise along the Broads in our little boat called Golden Copper. Nick's a keen sailor and the boys are getting good at it, so I'm a deckhand and cook. The boat would then magically start floating around the Greek island of Kefalonia. We'd swim in beautiful coves, then eat lunch in a fishing village. After that I'd go to Moscow to see the Bolshoi perform Romeo And Juliet. All the family would then stroll around Rome and have pasta for dinner with some white wine, then ice creams at Gelateria Giolitti. We'd end the day back at home in west London.



PS...

Michelle Pfeiffer stars in psychological thriller *Mother!* – in cinemas Friday. Ringo Starr's new album, *Give More Love* featuring Sir Paul McCartney, is out the same day. And *Juliet Stevenson* opens in *Wings* at London's Young Vic on Thursday



NEXT WEEK

- Robert Webb on Back, his hilarious new comedy with Peep Show co-star David Mitchell
- Make the ultimate Cornish pasty with our Poldark cookbook recipes
- Britain's best TV listings