

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's cricket commentator Jonathan Agnew

The prized possession you value above all others... My England cricket cap I was given before my Test debut against the West Indies in 1984. It's priceless and sits in a frame on my wall at home in Leicestershire.

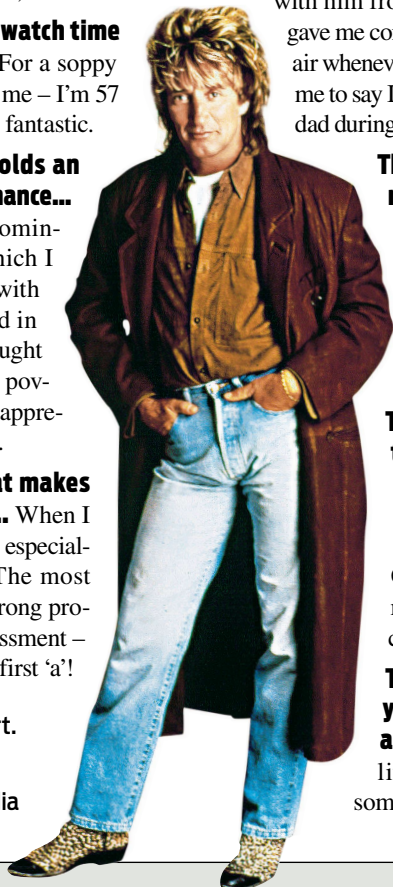
The biggest regret you wish you could amend... I wish I'd done better for England. I only played three Tests and three One Day internationals. You have to take your chances and, for whatever reason, I didn't.

The film you can watch time and time again... For a soppy old so-and-so like me – I'm 57 – Love Actually is fantastic.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... City Of Joy by Dominique Lapierre, which I read while I was with the England squad in India in 1984. It taught me about extreme poverty and made me appreciate life far more.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... When I hear bad grammar, especially on the radio. The most annoying is the wrong pronunciation of harassment – emphasis is on the first 'a'!

Right: Rod Stewart.
Above right: After Eight mints. Far right: a tiger in India



The temptation you wish you could resist... After Eights. They're so moreish I can eat a whole box.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd sit in the cockpit of a space shuttle on a mission.

The person who has influenced you most... Brian Johnston [the cricket commentator who died in 1994]. I worked with him from 1991-93 and he gave me confidence. I punch the air whenever his son Barry calls me to say I sounded just like his dad during a programme.

The song that means most to you... Have I Told You Lately by Rod Stewart. My wife Emma and I saw him perform years ago and that's our song.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Cricketing legend WG Grace. I'd ask if the rumours about him cheating are true.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... It takes very little effort to make someone happy.



'I can watch Love Actually time and time again, it's fantastic for a soppy old so-and-so like me'

We'd end the day by taking a water taxi via the Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The saddest time that shook your world... On 18 July last year when a nurse told us Emma had breast cancer. I broke down in tears.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... When Emma got the all-clear on 23 February this year, after going through so much with chemotherapy and everything. I had such a surge of euphoria, like I was floating.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To gallop faster than Emma across the plains in Argentina. She's a real rider and I'm slow.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Fairness matters. My dad, Philip, who's 88, rammed that into me as a kid.

The order of service at your funeral... I was a choirboy so I want a big choir with uplifting choral music. I want plenty of humour, with outtakes from funny commentary moments. I want to be carried out to Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer.

The way you want to be remembered... As a kind person who put a smile on faces.

The Plug... Jonathan returns to Test Match Special on BBC Radio 4 and 5Live Sports Extra for the two New Zealand v England Test matches. The first begins on Thursday. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Flying my own small plane is

my escape. I learnt to fly in 2006 and share ownership of a Socata TB10. I love to take it from Nottingham to Skegness with my cocker spaniel Tino for a walk on the beach.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... Perfectly working hands. I have suffered from Dupuytren's contracture (thickening of tissue that makes fingers curl) since 2000 and have had 11 operations.

The unending quest that drives you on... To engage people in cricket, it's the most wonderful sport.

The poem that touches your soul... Jerusalem. Hearing it sung by the crowd moments before the start of a Test match raises the hairs on the back of my neck.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm a bumbling softy with no backbone because I chat away humorously about cricket. Beneath all that is a fiercely competitive individual.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Marrying Emma in 1996. She's changed my life in so many ways. More than anything, she's helped give me focus.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd create a law banning cyclists in London from morphing into aggressive megalomaniacs on a suicide mission.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd begin the day with Emma on a tiger safari in Pench National Park, India. We'd see the tigers and have breakfast in the jungle before going horse-riding at Los Potreros ranch in Cordoba, Argentina. We'd have lunch at Aquarium restaurant in Grenada. I'd have fish and a few rum punches, then go for a swim. Afternoon tea would be at the Duke Of Marlborough hotel in Russell, New Zealand, where we'd watch the sun set before going for dinner at Doyles in Watson's Bay, Sydney. I'd have seafood and white wine.



PS...

Claire Foy is a woman trapped in an asylum in Unsane – in cinemas Friday. Jessie Ware's live tour starts in Glasgow on Tuesday. And Ruthless! The Musical, featuring Dancing On Ice judge Jason Gardiner, is previewing at London's Arts Theatre now



NEXT WEEK

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