

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's ex-England rugby player Ben Cohen

The prized possession you value above all others... I'm not at all materialistic and the only things I truly cherish are my three children – my ten-year-old twin girls Harriette and Isabelle [with his ex-wife Abby] and one-year-old Mila [with his girlfriend Kristina Rihanoff, his partner on Strictly Come Dancing in 2013].

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... As a professional sportsman, you learn not to have regrets. You need to be ruthless and look forward.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Coffee. Every day I have two large black Americanos, which is four shots of espresso. Way too much.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... I love the Millennium trilogy of crime novels by Stieg Larsson, including *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo*.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd follow the Queen and Prince Charles around to see if they ever talk about the succession.

The person who has influenced you the most...

Wayne Smith, my coach at Northampton Saints, who was there for me at my darkest hour. My dad was killed in 2000 [Peter Cohen, 58, was seriously injured in an attack at a nightclub and died a month later]. Wayne helped me channel my anger and pain from his death into rugby.

The film you can watch time and time again... *Oliver!* I first saw it when I was little and loved all the songs.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Slow drivers, especially in rush hour. They clog up the road, and I think they're just as dangerous as someone who's speeding.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... I'd love to have a beer with my dad and chew the fat.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Have good manners, show respect and look someone in the eye when you talk to them.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Flying helicopters. I learned in 2007, but I don't get to fly too often because I'm so busy.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My hearing. I've suffered from tinnitus all my life and constantly have a screaming noise in my ears. I'd love to experience peace and quiet, or listen to the birds singing, but I only have 46 per cent hearing. The upside is that I'm England's second-highest try scorer – mainly because I couldn't hear other players shouting for the ball, so I didn't pass much!

The unending quest that drives you on... To make a positive difference with everything I do.

The poem that touches your soul... Sorry, but poetry doesn't do it for me, so I don't have one.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm rude because I walk past people or ignore them. It's because I'm deaf.

'I scored lots of tries because, as I'm deaf, I couldn't hear team-mates shout for the ball, so I didn't pass much!'

on all the rides, then I'd have dinner with Kristina in the restaurant up the Eiffel Tower. I'd have snails and foie gras, followed by steak with a few glasses of pinot noir. Kristina and I would end the day in a chalet at Soho Farmhouse in Oxfordshire.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Winning the World Cup in Australia in 2003. Nothing prepares you for achieving the ultimate in your sphere, so it was a very weird feeling.

The saddest time that shook your world... Losing my dad still hurts. I think of him every day.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To emulate my success in sport in business, probably in the leisure industry.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Prove people wrong.

The order of service at your funeral... I'm fed up with being sad at funerals, so I just want people to mourn for 20 minutes, then have a party. I'll be buried next to my dad – I bought a plot by him for our family when he died.

The way you want to be remembered... As a loving father, a kind friend, and as someone who had fun.

The Plug... The Ben Cohen StandUp Foundation is dedicated to eradicating bullying. Its annual fundraising and awards event is in London on 28 June. Book tickets via <https://fourth-annual-fundraising-dinner-awards-ceremony.eventbrite.co.uk>. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



Left: a scene from *Oliver!*. Above: grapes and wine. Right: Times Square in New York



PS...

*Lily James stars in **The Guernsey Literary And Potato Peel Pie Society** – in cinemas Friday. **Nashville In Concert** begins its*

*UK tour in Birmingham today. And **Tina: The Tina Turner***

Musical opens at London's Aldwych Theatre on Tuesday



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Monty Don on how to create the perfect patio ● PLUS Britain's best TV guide