

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's jockey Sir Anthony (AP) McCoy*

**The prized possession you value above all others...** The Champion Jump Jockey trophy. Winners had to hand it back each year, but it was given to me permanently after I won it for the 20th time when I retired in 2015. It sits on the table in my kitchen and reminds me of all my sacrifice and fulfilment.

**The biggest regret you wish you could amend...** Missing my little sister Kelly grow up. I left home at 15 when she was five and I've always felt guilty about not being around. We have three sisters and a brother, but they are older. I see Kelly a lot now, so I'm making up for it at 43.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Chocolate digestives. I plan to have just two with a cup of tea, but eat the whole packet.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** Bringing Down The House by Ben Mezrich. It's a fascinating story about how six American students won millions in Las Vegas by card counting.

Right: Brad Pitt in Snatch. Above right: chocolate digestives and a cup of tea. Far right: Adare Manor

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'd follow drug smugglers as they take a big shipment into America to see how it's done and who in power is in on it.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Dirty shoes. I keep a cleaning kit in my car boot.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Snatch, directed by Guy Ritchie. Brad Pitt is brilliant. I annoy my wife, Chanelle, by saying the dialogue before the actors.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My first trainer Jim Bolger. He was strict but gave me discipline.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Michael Collins, the soldier and politician who fought for Irish independence in the 20th century. He shaped a lot of Ireland's history. I'd like to hear how he found his strength.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Tomorrow is promised to no-one. So have a vision and go for it.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'd steal a helicopter and save weeks of my life by not being stuck in traffic.



'People are often surprised that I'm 5ft 10in. When fans get photographs of me with their mates, they say, "Look, you're shorter than a jockey"'

at the Cheltenham Gold Cup. I'd have dinner at Scott's in Mayfair, then see Arsenal win the Champions League final. Finally, I'd watch Peaky Blinders at home in Lambourn, Berkshire.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Breaking Sir Gordon Richards' record in 2002. He had 269 winners in 1947 and I managed 289.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** My mum Claire dying on Boxing Day last year, aged 73. I miss her calling me in the evenings to fill me in on all the gossip. I'll never get over it.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** Not having 300 winners in a season. I had the chance during my last season, but then I got injured.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Live life to the full and don't look back, so you never have any regrets.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'll have a traditional Catholic service at Our Lady of Lourdes church in my home town of Moneyglass, County Antrim, followed by a two-day wake.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As a good person who made the best of his life and achieved something.

**The Plug...** Sir Anthony McCoy is an ambassador for Randox Health, the UK's leading health-check provider. Visit randox.com. Join him on ITV at 1.30pm on 28 April for coverage of the last day of the jumps racing season. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** The life of the Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar. I've never drunk alcohol or done drugs, but he fascinates me. At one point he was making \$60 million a day.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** A full set of healthy bones. I have metal plates in my back, my right arm, my right wrist and my left leg. But I would miss being a bit crooked because all those injuries are my battle scars. I enjoyed winning them!

**The unending quest that drives you on...** Racing was my life for so long and God knows what will replace it. There's nothing quite like riding a winner in front of 80,000 people.

**The poem that touches your soul...** Seamus Heaney gave me a framed print of his poem The Forge in 2002 after I beat Sir Gordon Richards' record for the most winners in a season. He signed it, 'Anthony – keep forging ahead'. It's up in my kitchen.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** People are surprised I'm 5ft 10in. When fans get photos of me with their mates, they go, 'Look, you're shorter than a jockey!'

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** When I fell off a horse aged 17 and broke my leg. Jim Bolger said, 'I saw you crying like a baby so you've no chance of making it as a jump jockey.' From then, I was determined to have no fear.

**The song that means most to you...** The Killers' Mr Brightside. It's uplifting – I sang it on A League Of Their Own in 2016.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...** I'd have a fry-up, which I could never enjoy when racing, then play golf with Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy at Adare Manor in Limerick. I'd head to Barbados with Chanelle and our kids Eve, ten, and Archie, four. Then I'd ride the winner



## PS...

*Robert Downey Jr's Iron Man stars in The Avengers: Infinity War – in cinemas Friday. Willie Nelson's album Last Man Standing is out the same day. And Baz Luhrmann's Strictly Ballroom The Musical opens at London's Piccadilly Theatre on Tuesday*



## NEXT WEEK

- Be a show-stopping cake decorator! Royal baker Fiona Cairns shows you how in our brilliant new partwork
- PLUS Britain's biggest and best TV listings