The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s Grand Designs’ Kevin McCloud

The prized possession you value above all others… A 2in-high model of a Roman wall which I made from cork in 2009 under the tuition of a master modeller in Rome. It’s like a little piece of art.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend… Not working out what I wanted to do in life until I was 35. I’m 54 now.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance… The Book Of Common Prayer. I was brought up as a Methodist and I sang in the choir at Cambridge University, so I’m deeply connected to the text.

The person who has influenced you most… My father Donald. He was a scientist and was always making or repairing things. There was never any question of hiring someone to fix the car or do up the house – we did it all. Dad gave me an instinct to find out how things work, which underscores everything in my life.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day… I would ride a vintage Triumph motorbike recklessly around London.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise… Laziness. I spent much of my life being lazy, but now I’m so richly to do things that I don’t like to see it in others.

The film you can watch time and time again… Trading Places. Dan Aykroyd and Eddie Murphy are so good together. I love its unadulterated silliness.

The temptation you wish you could resist… Haribo sweets. Once I start on Haribo sweets, I can’t stop! I love the way you can just eat them in a foil pack.

The poem that touches your soul… The works of John Hegley, but it’s impossible to choose just one poem. They all have a sharp truth in their writing.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity… Planting trees is my big hobby. I’ve planted hundreds around my home. I love the story of a tree’s life cycle.

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The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you… To own a hilltop vineyard in Italy and spend my days tending the vines. I could still do it in my 80s.

The philosophy that underpins your life… Now you’re here, get on with it.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions… I’d meet a bunch of mountaineering soulmates at the foot of Mont Blanc in France at dawn. We’d cross-country ski, climb to a glacier, marvel at the views, then ski down – to Rome! Here, I’d be joined by my wife Zani and our children [Elsie, 12, Milo, 16, Grace, 22 and Hugo, 26; the elder two are from a previous relationship]. We’d visit the Ara Pacis monument, and have lots of pasta at a small trattoria. I’d also have a delicious Roman stew and lemon tart with some good Italian red wine. We’d travel to the Isle of Skye to stay at a friend’s house and watch whales breach. I’d spend time talking to the makers of Harris Tweed, which is a passion of mine, then I’d be joined by a club of fellow whisky lovers to drink the night away with Talisker single malt, while watching the Northern Lights.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever… The year I spent working in a Tuscan vineyard when I was 18. I saw the whole cycle of the making of wine.

The way you want to be remembered… Just to be remembered would be nice, but we’re all little specks of dust, so it’s highly unlikely.

The crime you would commit knowing no one would ever find out… I’d prefer for the service to be one of total disorder! I’ll be dead so I wouldn’t care if they threw my body in a ditch. I’ll leave money for a wake, to make up for my curmudgeonly side that’s kept me away from so many parties. I’d be happy for my ashes to be scattered on the hills of Dowedale in Derbyshire.

The misapprehension about yourself… I’d be dead so I wouldn’t care.

The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint… Benjamin Franklin. He came from modest beginnings to become one of the Founding Fathers of America. I’d love to know what he makes of the world today.

The philosophy that underpins your life… Now you’re here, get on with it.

The order of service at your funeral… The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions… I’d meet a bunch of mountaineering soulmates at the foot of Mont Blanc in France at dawn. We’d cross-country ski, climb to a glacier, marvel at the views, then ski down – to Rome! Here, I’d be joined by my wife Zani and our children [Elsie, 12, Milo, 16, Grace, 22 and Hugo, 26; the elder two are from a different relationship]. We’d visit the Ara Pacis monument, and have lots of pasta at a small trattoria. I’d also have a delicious Roman stew and lemon tart with some good Italian red wine. We’d travel to the Isle of Skye to stay at a friend’s house and watch whales breach. I’d spend time talking to the makers of Harris Tweed, which is a passion of mine, then I’d be joined by a club of fellow whisky lovers to drink the night away with Talisker single malt, while watching the Northern Lights.

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