



From top: A hated speed camera, sailing, breakfast favourite honey on toast, Cambridge University, bluebells, Nancy Sinatra, piano, Mozart and The Lord Of The Rings

**The prized possession you value above all others...** Our sailing boat, Night Swimming. It represents family time, freedom and relaxation. Usually you can't get a mobile signal when we're sailing – bliss – and nothing beats the smell of bacon cooking in the sea air.

**The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...** That my mother, Margaret, never met my younger daughter, Eleanor. She died from Alzheimer's eight years ago when she was only 61.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...**

Breakfast of honey on toast and tea at home with my husband John and our daughters, Natasha, 11, and Eleanor, five, followed by a walk through the bluebells in a wood somewhere. Then to Paris, drinking *cafés au lait* and trying to be chic and nonchalant. Afterwards, we'd sail to an island near the colonial town of Paraty on the coast of Brazil for a lunch of grilled prawns. I'd spend the afternoon mucking around with the children in the sea, then head to Rio de Janeiro with John for caipirinha cocktails and to dance all night.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Taking an extra five minutes' snooze in the morning, or having an extra coffee. I'm habitually, shamefully late.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** The Lord Of The Rings. I was attracted to its massive girth at the age of nine because I wanted to be reading the longest book in school. I've read it at least 20 times, yet still get caught up in its fantasy and romance.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...** I'd follow litter louts and put their sweet wrappers back in their pockets.

**The way fame and fortune has changed you, for better and worse...** I'm uncomfortable with the sycophancy that can come with fame. But I've met the most extraordinary people and witnessed some phenomenal talent at work.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** The American President, with Annette Bening and Michael Douglas. It's cheesy but hugely enjoyable.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My mother-in-law, Marion, is a constant inspiration. She always has a smile and time for everyone.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Mozart. I'd ask him: How do you do it? Where does the music come from?



I wish I could resist taking an extra five minutes' snooze in the morning. I'm habitually, shamefully late



# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week: BBC Proms presenter Katie Derham

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Stand up straight and smile. Confidence and friendliness are catching.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** I received a beehive for my birthday so the next step is the hat, suit and my own swarm. Then friends and family should prepare for sweet gifts with honeyed words and bad puns.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** A scrapbook

of notes from friends, theatre programmes and party invitations from my time at Cambridge University. It disappeared in a house move in the mid-1990s. I wanted to flick through it with my daughters, but perhaps it's best they hear the edited version.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To be effortlessly organised.

**The poem that touches your soul...** Music by Walter de la Mare. It has a great line that pretty much sums up the

power of music, 'When music sounds, gone is the earth I know, And all her lovely things even lovelier grow'.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm a goody two-shoes. There's an assumption that anyone who's ever read the news was head girl or boy, always wins pub quizzes, and never loses their cool. I fail on all of the above!

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Meeting my husband at a party in Cambridge when I was 23. I'd gate-crashed and he pretended to be from security to talk to me. Life became a lot more fun and hasn't stopped yet. I've never met anyone with more ideas, drive or kindness and with a more ridiculously infectious laugh.

**The crime you would commit, knowing you could get away with it...** It would be something against speed cameras. I want to be trusted to drive responsibly.

**The song that means most to you...** Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5 by Heitor Villa-Lobos. It doesn't have words so, technically, isn't a song, but it makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand up.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Nothing will beat the births of my girls, but being with my sister when she had her first child comes close.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** The death of my mother. What a shocking, criminal waste of a very bright and funny woman.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To sit at a piano during a party and take requests.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Be kind, work hard, have fun.

**The order of service at your funeral...** Ostentatious black plumed horses. The Intermezzo from Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, then *Up, Up And Away* by Nancy Sinatra, followed by an awfully big party.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As someone who made people smile.

**The Plug...** Katie Derham presents *The Proms* for BBC2 and Radio 3 from Friday. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

See Brad Pitt in controversial Cannes-winner *The Tree Of Life*.

Indulge your inner child at *The Tiger Who Came To Tea* at

London's Vaudeville Theatre. And listen in at the laid-back

Latitude Festival, from Thursday at Henham Park, Suffolk.



NEXT WEEK

● Stylish Fifties drama series

*The Hour*, set during the Suez

crisis ● Some sizzling barbecue

recipes for summer, from Jamie

Oliver's protégé ● A decade of secrets

from CSI ● PLUS Don't miss Britain's

biggest and most detailed TV listings