The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definite answer. This week: broadcaster and historian Dan Snow

The prized possession you value above all others... My books. I have about 1,000 and each one evokes memories of what life was like when I read them.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not taking up a rowing scholarship at University of California, Berkeley, after I finished at Oxford. It would have been amazing. Instead, I went to work with my Dad [broadcaster Peter Snow] at the BBC, but sometimes you face big decisions and there’s no wrong answer.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... One Hundred Years Of Solitude by Gabriel García Márquez. I read it when I was 17 and it filled me with a yearning to enter an adult world that was exotic, erotic and thrilling.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I’d film the interior of famous houses. There’s no end to the amazing buildings in Britain. I’d hire a yachtsman to take me around and I’d make a documentary film of all these treasures.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Salt and vinegar crisps. I ration myself to one packet a week because they’re so bad for you.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Last Of The Mohicans with Daniel Day-Lewis. The acting, story, look and sound are amazing. I’m fascinated by 18th-century America.

The person who has influenced you most... My mum, Ann. She’s always struck a balance between work and fun, compassion and tough love.

The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint... Horatio Nelson. I’d love to experience his legendary charisma. He got seasick, so I’d give him a wide berth at sea.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... I’m obsessed with preparing for the apocalypse! I doubt our infrastructure could cope with a large solar flare.

The poem that touches your soul... Ulysses by Tennyson. It has a verse for almost every situation we face in life.

The unending quest that drives you on... To see all the ancient ruins of Central and South America.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... Slide Away by Oasis. I was 15 when it came out in 1994 and my world was opening up as childhood slid off me.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I’d spend all day with my wife Edwina in New Zealand. Breakfast would be pastries in a cafe in Paris. We’d hike along the quayside in Portofino, Italy, before watching the Northern Lights in Scotland. Then we’d have Beef Wellington for dinner in a pub in Derbyshire with a glass or two of red wine. Edwina and I would have a night out in New York, then I’d finish the day looking at the stars from a raft floating 1,000 miles east of Newfoundland.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... The day I left a summer job in the Canadian Rocky Mountains when I was 18. To re-enter civilisation, I had to run along tiny trails, shouting out to ward off grizzly bears, but I didn’t have a trouble on my mind.

The saddest time that shook your world... In 2013, my wife lost our child six months into her pregnancy.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To read War And Peace. I have got to get that sorted!

The philosophy that underpins your life... Life is best organised as a series of adventures from a secure base.

The order of service at your funeral... Just friends and family telling silly, weird stories. My ashes can be thrown into the wind on the South Coast.

The way you want to be remembered... As someone who never took being happy and alive for granted.

The Plug... Dan has produced a series of history Apps. Find them in the Apple App Store or visit timelineww2.com. As told to Rob McGibbon.