

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

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



'I'm obsessed with preparing for the apocalypse. I don't think we can survive a large solar flare'

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!

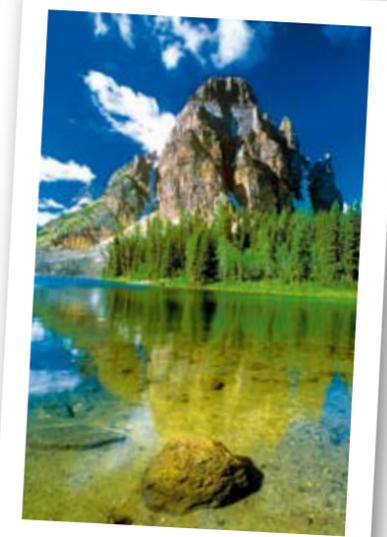
**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Life is best organised as a series of adventures from a secure base.

**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](http://timelineww2.com). ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



PHOTOGRAPHS: REX; ALAMY; SHUTTERSTOCK

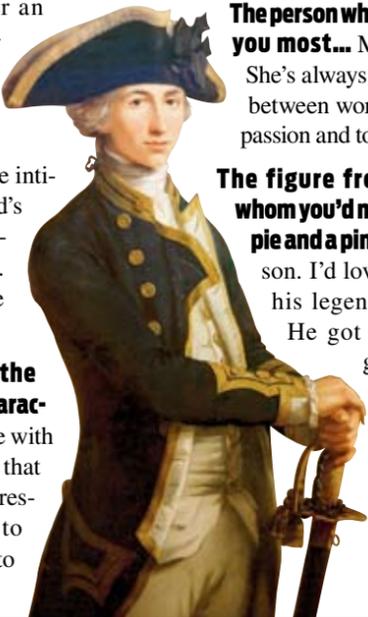
**The prized possession you value above all others...** My books. I have about 1,000 and each one evokes memories of what life was like when I read them.

**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 intimate moments of the world's most powerful and pompous men, then broadcast it. Hopefully, it would take them down a peg or two.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Losing the Boat Race with Oxford in 1999. I realised that life was not a golden progression from one success to another and that I needed to work harder.



**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Betraying children by discouraging them from aiming high.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** 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.

Left: Nelson. Above: Salt and vinegar crisps. Right: Assiniboine Provincial Park

**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 piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** You will fail at lots of things, but never let that stop you.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** The fearlessness of my 23-year-old self. When my daughter was born [Zia, now three], I went to Syria to make a programme about the war and I realised I was being selfish. I have responsibilities now and shouldn't have been running around a battlefield [Dan is now 36].

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To see all the ancient ruins of past civilisations, particularly those in Central and South America.

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

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** Nearly everyone thinks that Jon Snow is my dad. Dad is Peter and Jon is my first cousin once removed!

## PS...

Lara Pulver stars in Spooks movie *The Greater Good* – in cinemas from Friday. Alan Ayckbourn's comedy *Communicating Doors* with Imogen Stubbs is at London's Menier Chocolate Factory from Thursday. And the new album from Mumford & Sons, *Wilder Mind*, is out Monday



## NEXT WEEK

- John Craven on presenting Simon Cowell's new quiz show *Beat The Brain*
- Monty Don sings the praises of the Chelsea Flower Show
- PLUS Britain's best TV listings