The Best of British issue

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: BBC newsreader Kate Silverton

'People think I'm Natasha Kaplinsky and ask for my autograph. Often I don't correct them, but I haven't told Natasha that yet...'

From top: Dorset's Pennsylvania Castle hotel, Donovan, scuba diving, a rhino, Hotel Chocolat chocolates, Natasha Kaplinsky and It's A Wonderful Life

The prized possession you value above all others... A soapstone sculpture of a head I got in Zimbabwe during an Operation Raleigh expedition when I was 19. It transports me back to the incredible experiences I had on that trip that made me fall in love with Africa.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... If it doesn't happen again then I'll wish I'd had more children. [Kate is 42 and had 18-month-old Clemency after years of failed IVF.]

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd wake up in the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya with my husband [security expert Mike Heron] and our little girl. We'd cook breakfast on an open fire, then go on safari. We'd fly to the Como Shambhala spa in Bali for a spot of Tai Chi in the rainforest, then to the Maldives to scuba dive and carry out conservation work protecting sharks. I'd go cross-country skiing in Gstaad in the afternoon, then I'd take over the Pennsylvania Castle hotel in Dorset for my parents, my two sisters and the whole extended family. We'd walk along the coast, then have roast lamb with crispy roast potatoes, followed by sticky toffee pudding and a Paxton & Whitfield cheese board – including stinking bishop! I'd end the day with a book in front of a fire.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Chocolate from Hotel Chocolat or Lindt, especially pralines.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Daughter Of The Desert by Georgina Howell, which is about my heroine, Gertrude Bell. She was born in 1868 and was a linguist, cartographer, photographer and archaeologist. She travelled across Arabia and helped form the modern state of Iraq.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd team up with Prince William [a patron of conservation group Tusk Trust] to track rhinoceroses in East Africa and protect them from the poachers.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Drivers not checking for cyclists.

The film you can watch time and time again... Watching It's A Wonderful Life has become a Christmas Eve tradition in our house. I cry every time.

The person who has influenced you most... My parents, Terry and Patricia. Dad encourages me to follow my dreams, and Mum gives sensible advice. They've given me the right balance.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Gertrude Bell. I'd love to get her thoughts on what's happened in Iraq.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... There is nothing to fear but fear itself.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Child psychotherapy. I have a degree in psychology with a focus on child cognitive development. Having Clemency has reignited my interest.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... Time to travel. Work and family constraints mean I can't be spontaneous.

The unending quest that drives you on... To be a great mum. No parent can be perfect, so it's important for us to continually evolve.

The poem that touches your soul... Nothing Gold Can Stay by Robert Frost, which reminds me that nothing is forever and nor should it be.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... The death of my friend Jamie Rumble from cancer when he was 26. I was working in the City then and before he died he asked me why I was still there as I'd always dreamed of being a journalist. He died in 1996. Through my tears, I arranged to visit the BBC and a week later I was volunteering in its Newcastle newsroom.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I'm Natasha Kaplinsky! People ask, 'Can I have your autograph, Natasha?' but often I won't correct them. I haven't told Natasha – I hope she'll forgive me!

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... It's difficult to find size 9 designer shoes, so I'd break into the storerooms of Jimmy Choo and Manolo Blahnik and steal every size 43 pair they have.

The song that means most to you... Catch The Wind by Donovan was played for the first dance at my wedding, so it will always be special.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Holding Clemency for the first time and kissing her. After years of trying, she felt like a miracle.

The saddest time that shook your world... Jamie's death. He would have contributed so much to life.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To write a novel.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Commit and providence will follow you.

The order of service at your funeral... I'd have a traditional service at St Bride's, the journalists' church on Fleet Street where I was married. I'd want Rod Stewart's Sailing sung by the Welsh Fron Male Voice Choir. I'd be taken out to Born Free and have my ashes scattered in Kenya.

The way you want to be remembered... Simply as someone who cared.

The Plug... Kate is presenting News At One on BBC1 and the BBC News channel all this week and can be followed on Twitter at @katesilverton1. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PHOTOGRAPHS: XXXX