**The DEFINITE ARTICLE**

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions — and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: running legend Sir Roger Bannister

The prized possession you value above all others... My lifetime achievement award from the American Academy of Neurology in 2005. I was a neurologist for 40 years and it is quite an accolade to be honoured in that way.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Using my wife Moyra’s calligraphy pens. She’s an artist and her pens are precious. She quite rightly tells me off!

The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint... The 18th-century writer Samuel Johnson. I’ve such respect for his achievements.

The 18th-century writer Samuel Johnson. Right:

The 18th-century writer Samuel Johnson.

I’ve such respect for his achievements and the fine life he led. He struggled with religion for much of his life, so maybe we could discuss that.

The prized possession you value above all others... My lifetime achievement award from the American Academy of Neurology in 2005. I was a neurologist for 40 years and it is quite an accolade to be honoured in that way.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Using my wife Moyra’s calligraphy pens. She’s an artist and her pens are precious. She quite rightly tells me off!

The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint... The 18th-century writer Samuel Johnson. I’ve such respect for his achievements.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Diseases Of The Heart And Circulation by the doctor Paul Wood. It had a huge impact on my work in neurology.

The greatest regret you wish you could amend... Never bringing down my golf handicap from 28.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I’d go to the Oval Office and help Obama get his healthcare programme implemented.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... When people are downbeat about the state of the world. I’m 85 and I remain hopeful and optimistic.

The film you can watch time and time again... A Matter Of Life And Death from 1946, which stars David Niven. It’s powerful and entertaining.

The person who has influenced you most... Moyra. She’s also 85 and we’ve been married nearly 60 years. She’s my most valiant supporter and a wonderful mother to our four children.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... People often ask, ‘Did you mean to break the four-minute mile?’ It makes me laugh because I trained for two years with that sole aim. [Sir Roger ran the first sub-four-minute mile on 6 May 1954.]

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Diseases Of The Heart And Circulation by the doctor Paul Wood. It had a huge impact on my work in neurology.

The greatest regret you wish you could amend... Never bringing down my golf handicap from 28.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I’d go to the Oval Office and help Obama get his healthcare programme implemented.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... When people are downbeat about the state of the world. I’m 85 and I remain hopeful and optimistic.

The film you can watch time and time again... A Matter Of Life And Death from 1946, which stars David Niven. It’s powerful and entertaining.

The person who has influenced you most... Moyra. She’s also 85 and we’ve been married nearly 60 years. She’s my most valiant supporter and a wonderful mother to our four children.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... People often ask, ‘Did you mean to break the four-minute mile?’ It makes me laugh because I trained for two years with that sole aim. [Sir Roger ran the first sub-four-minute mile on 6 May 1954.]

The poem that touches your soul... Everyone Sang by Siegfried Sassoon. It’s about the end of the First World War and is filled with hope.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Coming fourth in the 1,500 metres at the Helsinki Olympics in 1952. I was favourite to win gold and had planned to retire from running, but when I got home I vowed to break the four-minute mile.

The rain you wish you could get away with it... In Invisible Man I’d go to the Oval Office and help Obama get his healthcare programme implemented.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Do as you would be done by.

The order of service at your funeral... My daughter Charlotte is an Anglican priest, so she’d conduct the service at St Mary’s Church, Oxford. I’d have Fauré’s Requiem and Abide With Me. Moyra and I bought a plot in a cemetery north of Oxford five years ago, so we can be buried next to one another.

The way you want to be remembered... Simply with affection.

The Plug... Sir Roger’s memoir Twin Peaks is published by The Robson Press, priced £20.

As told to Rob McGibbon

**NEXT WEEK**

- Go behind the scenes of comedy Mr Sloane with its star, Nick Frost
- Monty Don on how to grow the tastiest strawberries
- Try Tom Kerridge’s recipes for perfect picnic food
- PLUS Britain’s best TV listings

**PS...**

Carey Mulligan and Bill Nighy sizzle in Skylight at Wyndham’s Theatre, London. Belle, the true story of a slave’s daughter raised by her aristocratic great-uncle, is in cinemas on Friday. And Stockholm, Chrissie Hynde’s debut solo album, is out Monday