Almost a year in the making, X Factor winner Matt Cardle’s debut album Letters is out on Monday. See the Three Musketeers in 3D as a new version of Dumas’ classic hits cinemas. And Mark Rylance brings Jerusalem back to

**We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it’s acting legend Jean Marsh**

*The prize possession you value above all others...* My father Harry’s book of Samuel Taylor Coleridge poetry. When he died in 1991, the book was on his bedside table.

*The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...* I mourn the loss of a proper education. I left school at 12 for a theatre school where the focus was on dance. I educated myself.

*The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...* I would breakfast at Le Bonaparte Café in Paris, where even at my age – I’m 77 – I get appreciative looks from men, which is a wonderful way to start the day. I’d then go skiing in Switzerland, before a picnic lunch in the Chiltern Hills. Back to Paris for clothes shopping then I’d go to a concert by the National Children’s Orchestra at The Sage in Gateshead. Finally, I’d head to New York for the night.

*The temptation you wish you could resist...* Wine. I don’t drink much, so I make sure it is an expensive premier cru from Bordeaux or Burgundy.

*The book that holds an everlasting resonance...* The Good Soldier by Ford Madox Ford. It has a peculiar mix of humour and tragedy. I discover something new each time I read it.

*The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...* I am always moved by people who are struggling in life, so I would secretly help to make their life a bit easier.

*The way fame and fortune has changed you, for better and worse...* I can still go on buses although I often hear people saying, ‘No, it can’t be her. She doesn’t need the bus.’ As for the fortune, well, I am comfortable and I will always work.

*The film you can watch time and time again...* The Magnificent Ambersons, directed by Orson Welles in 1942. It predicts how inventions bring great advantage but can also be catastrophic. It is a remarkably affecting film.

*The person who has influenced you most...* My father. He was a working-class printer’s assistant and had a hard life. He was brilliant and self-taught. I had huge respect for him. He made me appreciate the arts.

*The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint...* The 19th-century French politician and philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. I’d discuss his comment ‘property is theft’ – over a glass of red wine and a tarte au pomme!

*The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...* Never get set in your ways. The world’s full of possibilities.

*The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...* Maths. I am fascinated by prime factors. They are poetic.

*The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...* A beautiful and expensive French coffee cup. It you could have again…

*The poem that touches your soul...* ‘Time Ago by E.E. Cummings. The late John Mortimer introduced me to it. It gives me empathy for anyone who is lonely. I live alone, but I am happy.

*The misapprehension about yourself is lonely. I live alone, but I am happy.\n
*The saddest time that shook your world...* My father’s death. He died from a brain tumour and it took me several years to get over the loss. I was distressed that his life had been so unsatisfactory. He wanted to achieve so much more, but for whatever reason he never fully realised his potential and that caused a lot of anger in him.

*The happiest moment you will cherish forever...* I went on a short break with an ex-beau to Switzerland for my 50th. We were on a beautiful walk and I thought, I am so happy. At that moment, my Friend called out, ‘I am so happy.’ It made everything special.

*The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day...* I would discuss his comment with him. I had huge respect for him. He made me.

*The order of service at your funeral...* I’d like a traditional Catholic mass in a country church with Mozart’s Requiem. I’ve put aside money for a wonderful party with great champagne.

*The way you want to be remembered...* I would be happy if people thought: Jean is dead. Oh, I will miss her. The Plug. My novel Fiennders Abbey is out now and The House Of Eliott is released in December. Both are published by Pan Macmillan at £7.99.

*As told to Rob McGibbon*