



# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: BBC sports presenter Chris Hollins*

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Do not fear failure.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** I am passionate about social history. I can stare for hours at old photographs trying to imagine what life was like for the people in them.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** The wide-eyed innocence of my youth. As a journalist, you become cynical very quickly and I don't like that feeling.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To never end a day wishing I could have done more.

**The poem that touches your soul...** Vitaï Lampada by Sir Henry Newbolt. It's about young men in war and when I read it at the age of 16, it made me realise that if I had lived in another time, it could have been me dying in battle.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm on one long jolly. I work incredibly hard.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Getting dropped from Durham University cricket team when I was 19. It was a wake-up call, warning me that I was not good enough to be a sportsman.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I would hack into a major bank and put £10,000 in everyone's account.

**The song that means most to you...** Frank Sinatra's I've Got You Under My Skin. When Sarah and I started going out five years ago it became our song. It sums us up and we had it for our first dance at our wedding.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** I had better say my wedding! But besides that it was a family holiday in the South of France when I was ten. We piled into a VW Beetle convertible and drove where we fancied for three weeks. We had the roof down, sang like crazy and had the best fun ever.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** When mum was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2009. She is the rock of the family and life stopped for everybody. She is all clear now, but the shock of it never really leaves you. I don't take life for granted any more.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To successfully assemble a flat-pack cupboard and prove to Sarah's family that I am not a total imbecile at DIY.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Say yes to everything – have a go.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I have a faith, so I would want a church service. Some nice organ music would be good and I'd want everyone to sing Jerusalem. But the main order of the day would be a big party for everyone to eat, drink and be merry. The only thing I care about is not dying with any regrets.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As someone who made a difference.

**The Plug...** Chris presents London 2012 Olympics coverage on Breakfast, BBC1 from 6am-9am. ■

*As told to Rob McGibbon*

**The prized possession you value above all others...** A pair of silver cuff links I got for my 21st birthday from my parents [Linda and John, the Chelsea football legend]. As a boy, I'd always wanted a pair of grown-up cuff links. My initials are engraved on them and they have huge sentimental value. I wore them on my wedding day last March.

**The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...** That I went along with peer pressure at school and didn't practise sport – especially cricket – to the maximum because it was uncool to be a try-hard. I just did the minimum and expected to become a professional sportsman because my dad was.

**The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions...**

I'd bomb around skiing all morning in Courchevel, France, with my wife Sarah, my sister Liz and her husband, Mark, and mum, but not dad because he's got dodgy knees and a bad hip. We'd meet him for lunch in a beautiful square in Florence. I'd play golf in the afternoon with some close mates at Ballybunion, on the south west coast of Ireland. I play off five but as this is a fantasy day, maybe I would break par! I'd have a pint of Guinness with the boys before meeting all the family in Barbados for Mojito cocktails and a great supper of jerk chicken.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Switching on every TV I pass for a quick flick through the channels.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** Bounce: The Myth Of Talent And The Power Of Practice by Matthew Syed. It proves that any child can be great at something if they put in a magical 10,000 hours of practice.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'd love to watch a genius such as Paul McCartney or Elton John making music.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Negativity – especially killjoys who dampen others' enthusiasm.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** Spartacus. I'm a sucker for an epic and this has to be the greatest.

**The person who has influenced you most...** Mum has been my moral guide and taught me to do the right thing.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Henry VIII – I'd like to know if he was really worried about England, or just a deranged drunk.

From top: Ballybunion, a pint of Guinness, a VW Beetle convertible, Henry VIII, a cricket bat and ball, Spartacus, a secret deposit of cash, Frank Sinatra

## PS...

*McFly play for free in London's Hyde Park tonight. Catch up with schoolboy Greg Heffley in Diary Of A Wimpy Kid: Dog Days, in cinemas now. And Meera Syal's in Much Ado About Nothing at Stratford-upon-Avon's Courtyard Theatre*



## NEXT WEEK

- The story behind uplifting new Paralympics drama Best of Men
- How to make deliciously different burgers
- Monty Don on why mint's a must
- PLUS Britain's BEST and most comprehensive TV listings