



From top: The Taj Mahal, Dickie playing for Leicestershire in 1963, an OBE, cricket stumps, A box of Black Magic, A Fistful Of Dollars and Barbra Streisand in The Way We Were

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My MBE and OBE from the Queen. I got the OBE in 1986 and the MBE this year for services to cricket and charity. I felt very humble and proud to be British.

**The unqualified regret you wish you could amend...** I should never have stopped playing cricket for Yorkshire. I left in 1960 because I couldn't get a regular place. I was 24 and went to play for Leicestershire, but I wish I had stayed and fought for my place.

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

I'd start the day with a long walk along Scarborough beach, then have coffee in a seafront cafe. The cricket ground at Scarborough is magical and if I could watch anyone it would be Garfield Sobers in full flight. I'd go to India to visit the Taj Mahal, which is wonderful in the moonlight, but would be back to Scarborough in time for dinner at the Tuscany Italian restaurant for ravioli with a glass of red. I'd stop the night at the Crown Spa Hotel, the best in town.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Chocolate. I can get through a box of Black Magic in a night.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** My bible. I won it for an essay I wrote for Sunday school when I was 12. I'm 79 now and it's quite tatty, but if ever I get depressed, I read a passage and it gives me strength.

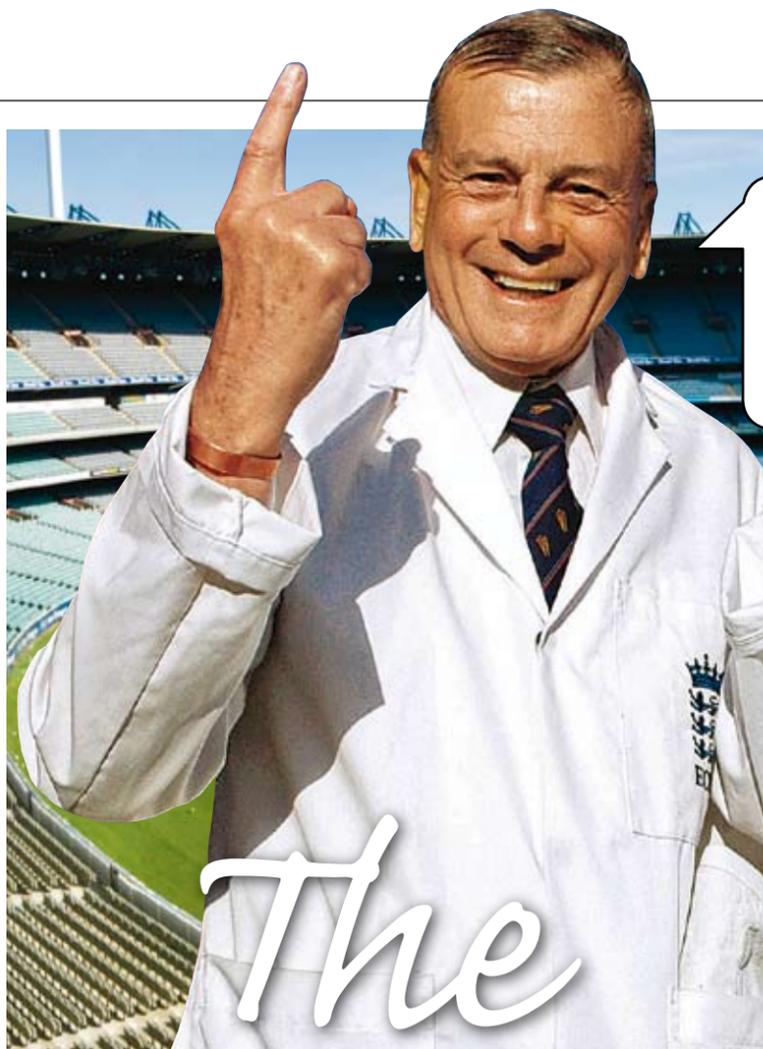
**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'd sit in on a meeting of world leaders at a critical moment for peace in the world.

**The pet-hate that makes your hackles rise...** Weeds! I have half an acre of garden near Barnsley. Nothing gets me angrier than weeds taking over.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** I love Westerns and nobody can touch Clint Eastwood, especially in A Fistful Of Dollars. He's magnificent.

**The person who has influenced you most...** My father Harold. He was up at 4am every day to work down the mines, but still found the energy to bowl at me after school. He told me I could make it to the top if I had no drink, no women and no going to nightclubs. I followed his advice and never married.

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** The 18th century politician William Wilberforce. He stopped the slave trade and was the greatest ever Yorkshireman.



I'll never forget having lunch with the Queen. At the end it was just me and her in the lounge chatting.

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's cricket umpire Dickie Bird*

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** Whatever you do in life, be sure you enjoy it.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** I've collected ties since I was a boy. I've got hundreds, all over the house, of all colours and sizes.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** A pair of gold cuff links I got when Yorkshire won the county championship in 1959. They were stolen in a burglary in the 1970s.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To stay healthy. I've had a stroke and my short-term memory is shocking. I get to Asda and forget what I'm buying!

**The poem that touches your soul...** Invictus by William Ernest Henley, the 19th-century poet. It's so inspiring.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I know everything about cricket! People relay particular bits of a game from years ago and expect me to remember it.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** In September 1969 I had a drink with the former Middlesex fast bowler John Warr and he suggested I become an umpire. Within two years, I was a Test umpire and stayed for 25 years.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** I'm a Christian, so I'd rather miss this question. No man is above the law.

**The song that means most to you...** I always get a lump in my throat when I hear Barbra Streisand's The Way We Were. With its beautiful sentiment of looking back fondly on the past, it makes me think of my parents.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** Having a private lunch with the Queen at Buckingham Palace in 1990. It was just me, Prince Edward and two others, but they all left at the end, so it was just me and the Queen in the lounge chatting. I shall remember it as long as the Lord gives me breath.

**The saddest time that shook your world...** When my sister Sylvia died from a brain haemorrhage in 1974 when she was 41. I took it badly but it was even worse for my mother, who was 70.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To have opened for England with a century at Lord's.

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Live life with a smile.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'm the president of the Barnsley Municipal Band, so I'd like them to play at a service at the church of St Mary in the town. And I want my ashes buried at the foot of the statue of me, which is on the spot where I was born in Barnsley.

**The way you want to be remembered...** For my children's sport foundation and as someone who was honest and treated both sides fairly.

**The Plug...** Please support The Dickie Bird Foundation which gives underprivileged children the chance to participate in sport. Visit [www.the dickiebirdfoundation.co.uk](http://www.the dickiebirdfoundation.co.uk) ■

*As told to Rob McGibbon*

## PS...

See Pixar's new movie *Brave*, in cinemas on Monday (right).

Catch Tamsin Greig in *Jumpy* at London's Duke of York's

theatre from Thursday. And listen to *Waterloo Sunset: The*

*Very Best Of The Kinks And Ray Davies*, out on Monday.



## NEXT WEEK

● Benedict Cumberbatch on his role in lavish new costume drama *Parade's End* ● Monty Don celebrates those belles of the wall, clematis ● Fabulous recipes from *The Great British Bake Off* ● PLUS Don't miss Britain's best TV listings guide