We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week it's Baroness (Jean) Trumpington

The prized possession you value above The way you would spend your fantasy **all others...** My flat in Battersea, south London. I've been here since 1988. Every old bird needs a nest and this is mine.

The biggest regret you wish you could **amend...** Not having more children. I have a son, Adam, so I'm lucky. My husband [historian and writer Alan Barker, who died in 1988] and I tried for another child, but it wasn't to be.

The temptation you wish you could **resist...** Cigars. Twice a month I like a Cuban Cohiba – a big fat cigar for a big fat girl! I smoked 50 cigarettes a day, but I quit in 2001. Cigars are a naughty treat.

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Alan's The Civil War In America. It brings to life the tragedy of the war. He dedicated it to me.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd go

to a men's Turkish baths then become visible, just for the fun of seeing the shock on their faces!

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...

If you are in any doubt, go by your instincts.

Right: George Clooney. Above right: A Rolls-Royce. Far right: Celebrations in London on VE Day

24 hours, with no travel restrictions...

I'd have eggs and bacon with coffee for breakfast at The Farmers Club in Whitehall with Adam. I'd swim in Lake Como, Italy, before lunch at the House of Lords with Baroness Turner. She's a great buddy, even though she's a trade unionist! I'd have pan-fried skate with anchovies, salad and a carafe of white wine. After, I'd play tennis with Roger Federer at the River Club in New York, and I'd win. Later I'd wander around Turenne in France and have a glass of champagne. I'd have a spicy Bloody Mary at the Knickerbocker Club in New

York, then dinner there with George Clooney. We'd have lobster and vintage Armand Rousseau Gevrey-Chambertin red wine. I'd end the day dancing at Anna-

bel's in London - with Mikhail Baryshnikov!

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Rafa Nadal picking at his underwear when he serves. I love tennis but I find that so unattractive.

The unending quest that drives you on...

To go to sleep at night with no regrets.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd steal a Rolls-Royce with a chauffeur and a police escort! I worked for the Queen in the 80s [as a baroness-

The film you can watch time and time **again...** Casablanca. It's so romantic. Ingrid Bergman and Humphrey Bogart are wonderful together.

in-waiting] and had to greet heads of

state at Heathrow. Driving back to Lon-

don with a police escort was thrilling.

The person who has influenced you most... Rab Butler [a Tory minister in the 40s, 50s and 60s]. He was a generous and wise advisor and friend.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Charles II. He turned England back into a lovely place to live after Cromwell. He was jolly attractive, so we'd probably have a good flirt!

The philosophy that underpins your **life...** Be prepared to take chances.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Needlepoint. I used to make cushions for rich friends with images of their fine houses, but I'm 91 now and my eyesight is bad, so it's not possible.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My mother's and grandmother's recipes dating back to the 19th century. They were destroyed in a fire. It's very sad.

The poem that touches your soul...

Rupert Brooke's The Soldier. I lost three boyfriends at Dunkirk and another one and a cousin at El Alamein. I knew the pain of losing people I loved and that poem brings back the raw emotion.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I don't get nervous when I'm doing public speaking. I'm all of a quiver beforehand.

The event that altered the course of your life and charac-

ter... Getting married in 1954 at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. It was lovely to be able to share things in life, to love and be loved. Alan and I were very happily married and I miss him dreadfully.

'If I was invisible, I'd go to a men's Turkish baths then become visible just to see the shock on their faces!'

The song that means most to you...

J'ai Ta Main [known in English as Holding Hands] by Charles Trenet. I went to Paris after the war to study art and that song reminds me of a wonderful romance I had there.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... VE Day. I worked at Bletchley Park during the war and we had an early idea that it was to end, so I went to London. I danced all night and remember kissing lots of men.

The saddest time that shook your world... Selling our family home, Luckboat House in Sandwich, Kent, in 1988. I have happy memories of our lives there and I still miss it.

The unfulfilled ambition that contin**ues to haunt you...** To be a portraitist. I studied art but I was a very bad artist.

The order of service at your funeral...

The service will be at St Margaret's, Westminster, with everyone singing All Things Bright And Beautiful and the Battle Hymn Of The Republic. I want my ashes scattered under a cherry tree in Kew Gardens that I planted in memory of Alan and where his ashes are.

The way you want to be remembered... For giving pleasure to other people.

The Plug... My two grandchildren have started businesses. Virginia's furniture design business is 9191 (www.9191.co.uk) and Christopher's personal training company is Over-Training (over-training.com). ■

As told to Rob McGibbon



David Essex stars in Brit thriller The Guvnors, in cinemas Friday.

Harper Lee's classic To Kill A Mockingbird returns to Regent's

Park Open Air Theatre on Thursday. And Kate Bush begins

her 22-night residency at the Hammersmith Apollo on Tuesday

NEXT WEEK

Animal magic... the true heart-warming story behind BBC1's new drama, Our Zoo

> Create a dazzling display with Monty Don's white garden • PLUS Britain's biggest and best TV guide

78 weekend

DAILY MAIL WEEKEND IS PUBLISHED BY ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS LTD. PRINTED BY THE POLESTAR GROUP. REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER AT THE POST OFFICE. © ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS LIMITED 2014

23 AUGUST National