

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept **THE** definitive answer. This week it's singer Sandie Shaw's turn



'I'd love to roll around naked in a room full of cash singing Big Spender'

The prized possession you value above all others... My *Gohonzon* [an ancient Buddhist scroll]. I've had it since I became a Buddhist when I was 30. I chant under it every day to focus my mind.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... That I didn't appreciate my mother Rosie when she was alive. I was the apple of my daddy's eye and Mum stepped aside so I could be a daddy's girl, which must have been a sacrifice. She died 20 years ago from old age at 73.

The film you can watch time and time again... Ben-Hur. My dad, Pat, took me to see it at our local cinema in Romford when I was ten. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the action scenes.

Charlton Heston in Ben-Hur. Above right: Mangoes. Far right: A statue of Buddha



The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Alice In Wonderland. My godmother Auntie Doreen used to say, 'If our Sandra can read and write, she'll do alright in life.' I was eight when she gave me Alice and it blew my mind.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Chocolate, especially dark chocolate with ginger.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I'd empty people's wallets of all their cash, fill a room with the notes and roll around naked in it singing Big Spender. You don't see real money any more, it's all credit cards, which is a shame.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... Trespassers. I can't stand it when people walk across my land in Oxfordshire and don't show it any respect.

The person who has influenced you most... A Japanese man called Kazuo Fujii, who taught me the concepts of Buddhism and how to apply them.

The poem that touches your soul... *Cargoes* by John Masefield. My English teacher Miss Parrot made us learn it parrot-fashion. It didn't touch my soul but I remember thinking, 'I don't want to be like her, I want to do something more exciting.' That was the moment I decided to follow my dreams.



The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Nelson Mandela. I feel sad that I never got to meet

him. His achievements were extraordinary and he was so loved.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Judge somebody by what they do, not what they say.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Architecture. I've done a lot of studying and love drawing diagrams. I've designed a house that I'm going to build on my land in Grenada.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... The money my first husband lost! [Sandie was married to designer Jeff Banks from 1968-78]. I was rich but he lost the lot through not paying his tax. But I'm rich again now!

The unending quest that drives you on... To live up to my principles in an environment that is so unprincipled.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That Essex girls are stupid. I've come up against it all my life. I know I'm bright, but I'd erase that joke for other girls' sakes.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Being a mother. I have three grown-up kids [Gracie, Amy and Jack] and I see motherhood as one event that has shaped my life. I feel the same about being a grandmother [Sandie has four grandchildren aged four to eight].

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd park anywhere I want in central London.

The way you would spend your fantasy 24 hours, with no travel restrictions... I'd do totally new things. My husband Tony and the kids can come along if they want, but I don't mind being on my own. I'd make a tour of forests and immerse myself in nature. I'd begin in a deciduous forest in England with a bowl of nuts and fresh fruit for breakfast, then go to a wood in northern Portugal, then one in Norway. In all of these places I'd forage for food and listen to bird-song. In the afternoon, I'd go to Sri Lanka for some mangoes and have a doze in a hammock. Later I'd go to Nepal to see the lotus tree where the Buddha became enlightened. I'd end the day in a wood in Japan sleeping in a treehouse.



PHOTOGRAPHS: CHARLIE GRAY; ALLSTAR; ALAMY; REX

PS...

Ben Affleck and Rosamund Pike star in thriller *Gone Girl*, in cinemas from Friday. An all-female cast present *Henry IV* at London's Donmar theatre from Friday. And Prince releases two albums, *Art Official Age* and *Plectrumelectrum*, on Monday



NEXT WEEK

- Kevin Whately on why he's brought back Lewis
- Behind the scenes at Britain's first luxury dog spa and hotel
- Monty Don's guide to glorious grasses
- PLUS Britain's best TV listings