



From top: Whale watching, a Manhattan cocktail, Horatio Nelson, cream tea, Number 10 Downing Street, pork scratchings, a light aircraft, the Yorkshire Dales, Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis in *Some Like It Hot*

The prized possession you value above all others... A painted wooden voting stick presented to me by the Kuna tribe in the rainforests of Panama [pictured]. I filmed with them in the 1970s and the stick made me an honorary tribesman, which meant I could take part in their council meetings – a great honour.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... That I didn't study harder at school. I left at 16 with five O-levels.

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

My wife Marilyn and I would wake up in our Oxfordshire cottage and have breakfast in bed and read the newspapers. We'd watch whales in Baja California, off Mexico, then have a beach lunch with the family – our daughters Emma and Victoria, their husbands and our five grandchildren – at the Hilton Resort at Flic en Flac, Mauritius. I'd spend the afternoon walking in the Yorkshire Dales, followed by a cream tea on the Cornish coast. I'd sip a Manhattan cocktail in the penthouse of a New York skyscraper hotel before having supper at home with Marilyn, because she's the world's best cook!

The temptation you wish you could resist... Pork scratchings at the pub!

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, which I studied for O-levels. It made me realise just how powerful the English language is in the right hands.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd eavesdrop on a Cabinet meeting at No 10 and reveal what was really said.

The pet-hate that makes your hackles rise... People in service industries who, when you ask for something, say, 'No problem' instead of 'Of course'. Why should there be a problem?!

The film you can watch time and time again... *Some Like It Hot* still makes me laugh. Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis are the funniest odd-couple ever and Marilyn Monroe is sensational.

The person who has influenced you most... My father Bill. He spent three years in a Japanese hell camp in WWII and never fully recovered. But, like a creaking gate, he kept going until he was 80. His strength shone through and he imbued in me a set of values to live by.

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... Horatio Nelson. I want to know why he wore his Admiral's uniform on the deck of HMS *Victory* at Trafalgar, making himself a sitting duck!



'People always confuse me with John Noakes, and stop to ask me about the Blue Peter dog Shep!'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: Countryfile presenter John Craven

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Never stop believing in yourself.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Civil aviation. I'm a bit of a plane-spotter and read magazines about it.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My childhood teddy bear, which I sent to a charity teddy bears' picnic about 20 years ago and never got back.

The unending quest that drives you on... Making sure I have something interesting to do tomorrow.

The poem that touches your soul... *High Flight* by John Gillespie Magee, who died flying a Spitfire aged 19 in 1941. It is about joy and enthusiasm.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I was on *Blue Peter*. Lots of people confuse me with John Noakes and stop me in the street to ask about Shep!

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Walking into a TV studio in 1970 as auditions were being held for a children's current affairs show called *Search* and cheekily asking if I could be considered. I got the job and that led to *Newsround*.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd hack into Google Earth and switch off those house pictures so that nosey parkers can't see where everyone lives.

The song that means most to you... *Johnny One-Note* by Ted Heath and his Orchestra, which was the *Newsround* opening theme. It's very catchy and people have been coming up to me and repeating it for the past 40 years!

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... My 70th birthday party [in 2010] in our garden on a glorious summer's day. I remember thinking how lucky I was to still have good health, a wonderful family and a job that I love.

The saddest time that shook your world... The death of my parents within a year of each other. Mum went first. She had motor neurone disease and at the end could only communicate by blinking. Then Dad died. Suddenly, at the age of 50, I was an orphan.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... I've always wanted to learn to fly light aircraft.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Have a go.

The order of service at your funeral... I'd like a couple of stirring hymns to send me on my way, then to have my ashes scattered either near the Buckinghamshire village where my children grew up, or at Wharfedale, Yorkshire, where as a boy I first discovered the countryside. Maybe a few here, a few there!

The way you want to be remembered... A good broadcaster who loved the medium of television, but regarded fame as a by-product, not a goal.

The Plug... John is on *Countryfile*, Sundays, BBC1 and his *Countryfile Handbook* is published by BBC Books. ■

As told to Rob McGibbon

PS...

*See Emma Watson in the coming-of-age film *The Perks Of Being A Wallflower*. Book for *Finding Neverland*, a musical about the creator of *Peter Pan*, at Leicester's Curve theatre. And listen to Van Morrison's album, *Born To Sing: No Plan B*, out on Monday*



NEXT WEEK

- The return of *Homeland*, TV's most gripping show – but what happens next with Carrie and Brody?
- Cook the perfect fruit crumble
- Monty Don goes back to the fuchsias
- PLUS Britain's best TV listings guide