The DEFINITE ARTICLE

We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: Springwatch host Michaela Strachan

The prized possession you value above all others... As I’m a vegetarian, it’s my vegetable garden at my home in Hout Bay, near Cape Town in South Africa. It has eight tiered veg patches in which I grow everything possible.

The biggest regret you wish you could amend... Not learning to play a musical instrument properly. I learnt the flute for a few years, but gave up when I was eight because it made my neck ache!

The temptation you wish you could resist... Singing Queen’s Bohemian Rhapsody when there’s a karaoke night. It’s excruciating – for everyone!

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... Born Free by Joy Adamsen. I read it when I was 12 and it fuelled my love of wildlife. I wanted to be Joy and have my own lion cubs.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... To be Doctor Who’s assistant. David Tennant would be my Doctor.

The person who has influenced you most... My mum. Jo. She’s 75 and never sees the bad in people.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... The figure from history for whom you’d most like to buy a pie and a pint... Dian Fossey [the US zoologist who protected gorillas in Africa in the 60s-80s]. She gave her life to save animals [Fossey was murdered in Rwanda in 1985].

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Cricket! I always thought it was boring, but my partner Nick and our nine-year-old son Ollie love it, so now I go to matches with them and enjoy it – though I often take a book!

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... My flexibility. I trained as a dancer and used to be able jump off a table and land in the splits. Now I’m 48 I can’t do it any more.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Don’t judge people by your own circumstances. You have to broaden your knowledge to understand them.

The poem that touches your soul... The poem I wrote about a baby orangutan called Lomon, who featured in a series I made called Orangutan Diary in 2007. It was about saving orphaned orangutans and I really connected with Lomon.

The piece of advice that you would give someone... With eight because it made my neck ache!

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... That I know everything about British wildlife! People send me photos of obscure insects asking what they are, but I don’t have a clue. Chris Packham does know everything, so they should ask him!

The event that altered the course of your life and character... The day I moved to South Africa in 2002. Because I made that leap, I met Nick, Ollie and Sam, 24]. We’d watch the sunrise by the beach we’d go to Knight Inlet in Canada to see grizzly bears salmon fishing in the rivers, then take a boat trip to follow orcas and humpback whales. We’d end the day back in Cape Town walking up Table Mountain – you can see the sunset on one side and the moon rising on the other. At the top Nick and I would share a bottle of chardonnay and a packet of cashew nuts. Then we’d take the cable car down and head home to bed.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... Finding out I was pregnant with Ollie when I was 39. I was filming in Vietnam when I found out and I ran around showing the test to all the crew!

The saddest time that shook your life... When I was 16, my dad lost his job and our family lost everything. It resulted in me suffering from anorexia. But we came through it all.

The philosophy that underpins your life... Always look on the bright side of life. The world can be a harsh place, but you have to find the positives.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Woman for a day... I’d live with Mongolia’s snow leopards. They’re elusive and little is known about them.

The song that means most to you... TUBThumping by Chumbawamba raised my spirits if I ever got low when I had breast cancer last year [she had a double mastectomy]. I’m doing really well now.

The person you most like to buy a pie and a pint... Because I made that leap, I met Nick, Ollie, Jade, 26, and twins Tom and Sam, 24]. We’d watch the sunrise by the beach we’d go to Knight Inlet in Canada to see grizzly bears salmon fishing in the rivers, then take a boat trip to follow orcas and humpback whales. We’d end the day back in Cape Town walking up Table Mountain – you can see the sunset on one side and the moon rising on the other. At the top Nick and I would share a bottle of chardonnay and a packet of cashew nuts. Then we’d take the cable car down and head home to bed.

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The order of service at your funeral... I’d be buried in a biodegradable box, or have my body fed to sharks! I also want people to be sad – having a party and getting drunk seems so disrespectful.

The way you want to be remembered... She got children interested in wildlife.

The Plug... Michaela will perform her children’s show Michaela Strachan’s Really Wild Adventures at zoos, wildlife parks and family festivals this Easter and summer. michaelastrachan.co.uk

As told to Rob McGibbon

Michaela at home in South Africa with her Jack Russell Toto

The Definite Article is written and researched by Charles Haddad. The London filter: As told to Rob McGibbon.

NEXT WEEK

● Learn how to draw your children or grandchildren in part two of our inspiring series ● Our columnist Rachel Khoo’s favourite dishes from around the world ● PLUS Britain’s best TV listings guide

Colin Firth and Michael Caine star in Kingsman: The Secret Service, in cinemas on Thursday. Tom Stoppard’s first play since 2006, The Hard Problem, is at the National Theatre now. And BGT winners Collabro begin a UK tour in Carlisle on Monday.