



From top: A vineyard on the Rhine, the Sex Pistols's Anarchy In The UK, wine, Sinatra, Lennon, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, gold, a scene from The Quiet Man and Vermeer's The Milkmaid

The prized possession you value above all others... My health. A few months ago I was diagnosed with a thyroid condition that's led to side effects like bloating and mood swings. They say I'm going to make a full recovery and I'm determined to stay healthy.

The unqualified regret you wish you could amend... I've always enjoyed that Frank Sinatra line, 'Regrets, I've had a few. But, then again, too few to mention'. I'm having such an amazing life, what could I possibly regret?

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

I'd spend the day having a glass of wine in each of the top vineyards in the world starting in Bordeaux to taste a Châteaux Latour 1982, then Burgundy, followed by the Rhine and Northern Italy. By this point I'd be pretty drunk, but I'd stagger on to South America and end the day in South Australia for a glass of Penfolds Grange 1962.

The temptation you wish you could resist... Drinking too much good wine! It's been my only vice – along with 90 per cent of the British population!

The book that holds an everlasting resonance... The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain. I was a working-class kid in Manchester when I first read that. It made me daydream of going on adventures like him.

The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day... I'd spend a day on the beach with my family, knowing that no one would take pictures of me. It always happens and I find it embarrassing, hurtful and unkind.

The pet hate that makes your hackles rise... People speeding in built-up areas. It's tragic and scary that they don't appreciate the potential consequences.

The film you can watch time and time again... The Quiet Man with John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara from 1952. I was brought up without a mum [his mother, also named Maureen, walked out when Mick was three and he has never known her] and seeing O'Hara with her striking red hair made me fantasise that my mum looked like that.

The person who has influenced you most... My dad Reg, who died in 2009, was a big influence because he brought me up. My wife Gabriella has also been a great influence, and my five-year-old daughter Romy influences the way I behave – because I have to go to bed early to get up with her!



'I can't resist drinking too much good wine. It's my only vice – along with 90 per cent of the population'

The DEFINITE ARTICLE

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

The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint... The 17th-century Dutch painter Jan Vermeer. He could make ordinary things, like a milk jug, look extraordinary. I got a degree in fine art and I love painting. Maybe I could get a few tips from him.

The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child... Avoid making enemies. I was brought up to always tell the truth, but the truth can hurt people. Now I think it's wiser to be conciliatory.

The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity... Medical research. I'm fascinated to see how our understanding of DNA and stem cells will change how we think we fit into the universe.

The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again... The Sex Pistols were a huge influence on me and I had two copies of the original 1976 Anarchy In The UK on vinyl. But they were stolen in burglaries when I lived in Moss Side, Manchester, in 1982.

The unending quest that drives you on... Composing something great that will last forever.

The poem that touches your soul... Roads To France about the First World War by the English poet Tony Walton. That first line, 'And finally I realised that all roads led to France', encompasses the futility of war.

The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase... I often read interviews describing me as short. It's bewildering because I'm 5ft 11in.

The event that altered the course of your life and character... Going to art school when I was 16. I'd been at a grammar school from 11 to 15 and because I suffer from Dyscalculia – number blindness – I was made to feel stupid. Art school opened up the world of creativity for me and I loved it.

The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it... I'd do a major gold heist like a real life Laverdier Hill Mob, but with better planning!

The song that means most to you... Holding Back The Years. I wrote that when I was 17 and first released it with a group called Frantic Elevators, but it only sold 25 copies. It came out again with Simply Red in 1985 and changed the trajectory of my life.

The happiest moment you will cherish forever... The birth of my daughter in 2007. It was incredible and joyful.

The saddest time that shook your world... The shooting of John Lennon. It just seemed such a tragic waste.

The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you... My next song. It's always to write my next song.

The philosophy that underpins your life... To keep the freedom to work.

The order of service at your funeral... A proper knees-up with plenty of great music and humour.

The way you want to be remembered... As a singer and songwriter.

The Plug... A deluxe double CD version of Mick's album American Soul is out now. Visit, www.mickhucknall.com and follow @SimplyRedHQ on Twitter. ■

As told Rob McGibbon

PS...

Richard Gere is a greedy hedge fund manager in Arbitrage, out Friday. See Tamsin Greig in Longing, a play based on Chekhov stories, at London's Hampstead Theatre from Thursday. And hear the nuns sing on Call The Midwife: The Album, out Monday



NEXT WEEK

● Sophie Okonedo takes us behind the scenes on BBC1's new whodunnit Mayday ● Cliff Richard, Downton's Phyllis Logan and other stars share recipes for their favourite teatime treats ● PLUS Britain's best TV listings