



'People think I'm a nincompoop but I've never made errors of fact in my commentary, although the odd Murrayism has crept in'

# The DEFINITE ARTICLE

*We ask a celebrity a set of devilishly probing questions – and only accept THE definitive answer. This week: F1 commentator Murray Walker*

**The figure from history for whom you'd most like to buy a pie and a pint...** Winston Churchill. I'd be awestruck, but I'd love to talk to him about the planning of D-Day.

**The piece of wisdom you would pass on to a child...** The same piece of advice my father gave me when I was about 12, 'It doesn't matter what you know, but who you know.' You can be a genius, but it's of little use if you have an obnoxious personality.

**The unlikely interest that engages your curiosity...** Hitler. I've read huge books about his life because I'm amazed how a little army corporal and a failed artist could rise to hold such power and create a world war, murder millions and destroy his country. I'm no admirer, but his story is fascinating.

**The treasured item you lost and wish you could have again...** A gold bracelet Elizabeth gave me in 1964, which fell off when I was walking in Scotland.

**The unending quest that drives you on...** To stay physically healthy. I'm 90 and in June I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma – blood cancer – but luckily I don't need chemotherapy.

**The poem that touches your soul...** John Betjeman's *Slough* amuses me.

**The misapprehension about yourself you wish you could erase...** That I'm a nincompoop who gets things wrong. I've never made errors of *fact* in my commentary but the odd wrong word, or 'Murrayism' has crept in.

**The event that altered the course of your life and character...** Joining the Army in 1942 at 19. I ended up a troop commander in charge of three tanks and I saw things that would change anyone.

**The crime you would commit knowing you could get away with it...** There's far too much crime in the world!

**The song that means most to you...** Rule, Britannia! always stirs me.

**The happiest moment you will cherish forever...** I thought my career was over when the BBC lost control of Formula 1 in 1996, but the next day I was offered a job at ITV. I was euphoric!

**The saddest time that shook your world...** The deaths of my parents. My father died too young at 66 from a heart attack. My mother Elsie lived to 101 and despite her age, I was sad to lose her.

**The unfulfilled ambition that continues to haunt you...** To walk properly again. I've been on crutches for four months after breaking my pelvis in a fall!

**The philosophy that underpins your life...** Treat your fellow man decently.

**The order of service at your funeral...** I'll have a simple humanist service. I want my ashes scattered at Jimmy Guthrie's Memorial along the TT course on the Isle of Man. Jimmy was a famous rider and a family friend.

**The way you want to be remembered...** As a decent bloke.

**The Plug...** The staff at Salisbury Hospital, Wiltshire, are trying to raise money for a CT Scanner. Please donate at [www.starsappeal.org](http://www.starsappeal.org). ■

*As told to Rob McGibbon*

**The prized possession you value above all others...** My OBE, which was presented to me by the Queen in 1996. I'm fervently patriotic, so I was very proud when I got it. When I met Her Majesty she smiled and said, 'I seem to have been listening to you for a long time!'

**The big regret you wish you could amend...** That I never raced in the Isle of Man TT motorbike rally. My father Graham won it in 1931. I was a good club racer on bikes but it's a demanding race and I didn't have the nerve.

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

I'd wake up with Elizabeth – my wife of 53 years – at the Four Seasons Hotel overlooking Sydney Harbour. We don't have children, so it would be just us all day. We'd have breakfast – muesli, fruit and coffee for me – looking at the Opera House and the Harbour Bridge from the balcony of our room. I'd then arrive in the Scottish Highlands for a walk near Ben Nevis. I'd also like to explore Wales, which I don't know well. We'd have lunch on a boat on the Danube in Hungary, then I'd go to Spa to watch my friend Nigel Mansell win the Belgian Grand Prix, before a cream tea at the Chewton Glen Hotel near our home in Hampshire. We'd have an aperitif somewhere classically Italian in Milan and dinner looking at Table Mountain in Cape Town with a few glasses of local shiraz red wine.

**The temptation you wish you could resist...** Watching too much television. I can easily watch four hours a day.

**The book that holds an everlasting resonance...** *Nuvolari* – the biography of the pre-war Italian racing driver Tazio Nuvolari. He made cars do things they were not intended to do.

**The priority activity if you were the Invisible Man for a day...** I'd follow F1 chief Bernie Ecclestone around to see what he's *really* like. He's an enigma.

**The pet hate that makes your hackles rise...** Being tailgated on the motorway. It's dangerous, stupid and intolerable.

**The film you can watch time and time again...** *Chicago* with Richard Gere, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Renée Zellweger. I love the music, the choreography and the zany storyline.

**The person who has influenced you most...** A man called Jack Wynne-Williams. I worked for his advertising agency in my mid-30s and he taught me how to work with people.

From top: Ben Nevis, the Isle of Man TT motorbike rally, Winston Churchill and Britannia

Left: An OBE and Catherine Zeta-Jones in Chicago

## PS...

*Harrison Ford's sci-fi spectacular Ender's Game hits cinemas on Friday. Ben Miller stars in The Duck House at Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre from Thursday. And a new album by funk legends Earth, Wind & Fire – Now, Then & Forever – is out Monday*

## NEXT WEEK

- Terry Wogan shows us around the most special room in his house
- MasterChef 2013 winner Natalie Coleman on how the show saved her from a mid-life crisis
- Jamie Oliver cooks Peruvian
- Britain's best TV listings

