Film
I've discovered Netflix late in life, and now spend winter evenings glued to my laptop, watching everything I've ever missed, selecting films on the principle that I recognise the name and that if they have four stars or more they must be good – and large they are. The star system works better for films than for books, where interested parties so easily up or down ratings. My all-time favourite film is The Wizard Of Oz, first seen in 1939 when I was eight, and my life was full of wicked witches I thought better dead.

Books
Life After Life by Kate Atkinson is a brilliant evocation of alternative universes as they affect a single life. The ups and downs of rebirths, re-endings and restarts! All-time favourites! They shift from day to day. Aldous Huxley's After Many A Summer Dies The Swan came instantly to mind; strong plot, pure thought, social comment. Huxley's shockingly neglected these days apart from Brave New World.

TV
Borgen continues to absorb me, though I'm sorry Sidse Babett Knudsen [below] has changed from a harassed mother trying to run Denmark, to a slim-hipped divorcée with an unconvincing English voice that she addresses in someone else’s voice. My all-time favourite is The Life And Loves Of A She-Devil, a 'cult classic' which screened in 1986. I would think that, wouldn't I, it being based on my novel, though I'm sorry Sidse Babett

Radio
I like the The Moral Maze on Radio 4 – always interesting (if not a bundle of laughs). In my youth I liked The Brains Trust – same programme 60 years ago. Its star, the philosopher Professor Joad had a catchphrase when presented with any proposition: 'It all depends what you mean by (this or that)'. I find it useful to this day.

Gigs
Try finding one – I live in Dorset. Half the pubs have closed, what with the price of beer, police sitting outside and no smoking. Those that remain I've discovered Netflix late in life, and now spend winter evenings glued to my laptop, watching everything I've ever missed, selecting films on the principle that I recognise the name and that if they have four stars or more they must be good – and large they are. The star system works better for films than for books, where interested parties so easily up or down ratings. My all-time favourite film is The Wizard Of Oz, first seen in 1939 when I was eight, and my life was full of wicked witches I thought better dead.

5 FABULOUS FACTS (& A MASSIVE FIB*) ABOUT... MATT SMITH

1 HE NEARLY BECAME A PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLER
Smith wanted to kick a football for a living, rather than act, and was scouted by Leicester City, then in the Premier League. But a back injury at 16 put paid to his ambitions and he ended up a Time Lord. Bad luck, Matt. Matt Smith's final outing as Doctor Who is on Christmas Day, BBC1

2 HE WAS FATED TO PLAY THE DOCTOR
Getting the Doctor Who role was written in the stars. Smith's agent Wendy played Zoe Herriot, the Second Doctor Patrick Troughton's companion back in 1963.

3 WHO'S THAT ON THE OLD IVORIES?
Matt's an accomplished pianist; that's him playing on Robbie Williams's guest-strewn Swings Both Ways – laying down a mean boogie-woogie on Minnie The Moocher.

4 HE FAILED THE AUDITION FOR DR WATSON
Smith doesn't have a 100 per cent record with doctor roles. he was turned down for the Dr Watson role in TV’s Sherlock. No matter: if they ever remake Wyatt Earp he should have a chance at the Doc Holiday role.

5 RYAN GOSLING IS HIS NEW BEST MATE
Floppy-haired Smith, the quintessence of restrained Englishness, has been picked by the action-loving Drive and Gangster Squad star for a new film, How To Catch A Monster.