

I LIKE GIRLS WHO ARE GOOD COOKS

says Gareth!

GARETH'S LIVED QUITE A FULL LIFE! FROM THE NAVY TO NEW ZEALAND TO UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS TO ... WELL YOU KNOW THE REST!

When I visited Gareth Hunt at his home in London his cheeks were greenish-pale and his eyes were blood shot. 'You'll have to excuse me if I'm not very chirpy today,' he croaked. 'I've got food poisoning.'

'No it wasn't an Avengers type baddie trying to bump me off. Would you believe I caught it from a tin of baked beans I bought at a very exclusive shop? That'll teach me to try to be posh. Come in anyway, and just don't expect any merry quips!'

He led the way into the sitting room where we relaxed with a cup of coffee and watched the antics of Popeye the cat who was strangling himself with the hearth rug. Gareth began to tell me about his schooldays. 'They weren't exactly glorious,' he admitted.

'I think I was what you'd call a late developer. And as I was a war baby — I was born in 1943 — I spent the first few years of

my life being evacuated, which didn't help.

'But I enjoyed school. I enjoyed the madness of it all. I loved writing English compositions although my spelling was unbelievably bad. And I thought science was fascinating — it meant you could blow up the science room quite easily.'

Gareth never really thought about acting at school — in fact he didn't think much about careers at all.

'Nobody ever asked me what I wanted to do. I remember one teacher said to me 'You're quite tall — you should be a policeman. And that was that!' When he left school, he didn't take his teacher's advice. Instead he went into the merchant navy. 'It was the first thing I thought of,' he said. 'I wanted to travel, and this seemed the best way of doing it. I was tramping around the world at the grand old age of

15½. I stayed in the Merchant Navy for six years, and then when we were off New Zealand I suddenly got fed up with it all. So I jumped ship. I stayed in New Zealand doing odd jobs until I was caught and deported. I arrived home at last with a total fortune of precisely a halfpenny.'

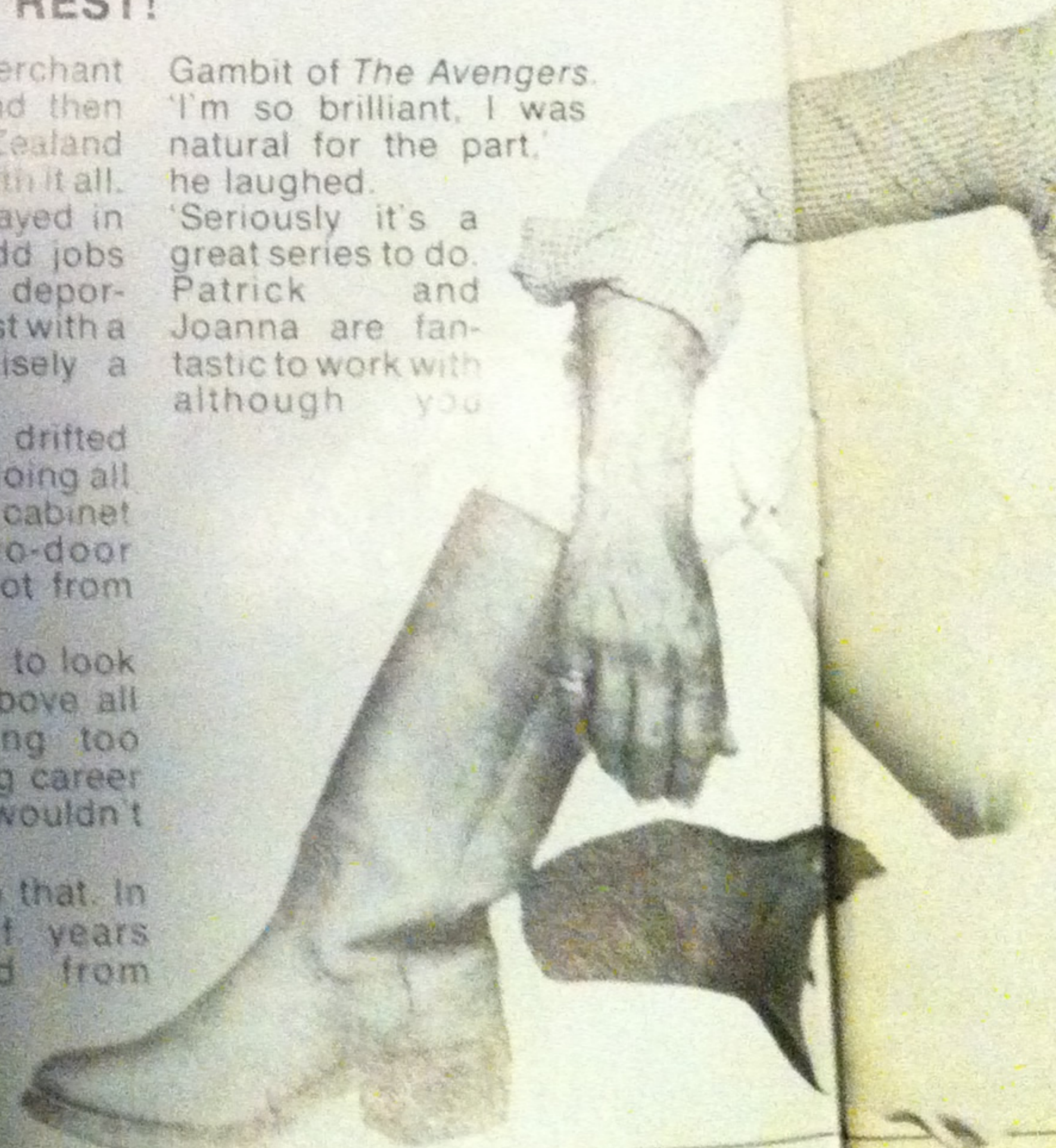
After the Navy Gareth drifted round for a few years, doing all sorts of jobs from cabinet building to door-to-door selling. 'I've learnt a lot from those jobs,' he said.

'They showed me how to look after myself — and above all not to trust anything too deeply. So if my acting career fell apart tomorrow, I wouldn't be too surprised.'

It's hardly likely to do that. In the past couple of years Gareth's graduated from Frederick the footman, a small part in *Upstairs, Downstairs* to the suave, Mike

Gambit of *The Avengers*. 'I'm so brilliant, I was natural for the part,' he laughed.

'Seriously it's a great series to do. Patrick and Joanna are fantastic to work with although you



ARE Gareth!

REALAND TO UPSTAIRS
ST!

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have to be on your toes to keep
up with them. They have this
gag going that I'm a Welsh boy
straight from the mountains,
just because my name
happens to be Gareth.
'I do have Welsh blood in me.
But I'm a Londoner. Born
and bred in Battersea!'
Of course I couldn't resist
asking Gareth my favourite
question. What about
girls?

Well, two things he
looks for in girls
are a sense of
humour and a
taste for good
food.
'I love girls who
can cook me
beautiful meals,
he said. 'Aren't I a
pig! I eat anything
— at least I do
when I don't have
food poisoning! I
love adventurous
food and cas-
seroles with lots
of spices.
'And if a girl can
make me laugh
while I'm eating,
then she's the
girl for me! Just
so long as she

isn't laughing because she's
burnt an expensive steak!
Suddenly he started shouting.
'Get off the table!
I jumped nearly ten feet in the
air. But it wasn't me he was
talking to — it was Popeye the
cat who had leapt onto the
table and was nosing round a

felt the grass!
'He'd never felt anything like it
before. He couldn't figure out
what it was! He's still a bit wary
of it — Stupid mog aren't you?
Stupid.'
Popeye didn't seem too wor-
ried by Gareth's comments.
Well, that's understandable.

**'If a girl can make me laugh while I'm
eating, then she's the girl
for me. Just so long as she isn't laughing
because she's burnt the dinner!'**

lovely flower decoration in the
centre.

'Stupid mog,' said Gareth fond-
ly. 'Actually I shouldn't be rot-
ten to him — he's having trou-
ble these days.

'See for years I lived in a fourth
floor flat right in the middle of
London and he got on fine —
but he never went outdoors.
He'd never seen the big, wide
world.

The day I moved into this house
I put him straight in the garden.
I thought he'd be pleased. But
he was so surprised when he

Anything Gareth says, is OK by
me — don't you agree.
But back to Popeye... he just
curled up on Gareth's lap and
went to sleep with a truly bliss-
ful expression on his face.
Some cats have all the luck!
Sometimes I wish I could lead
their lives, don't you!

**Gabby talks to
Gareth Hunt!**