



PHOTOGRAPHS: TERRY O'NEIL, JOHN PAUL (INSET).



The lovely Miss Lumle an Avenger fighting stardom

by Valerie Clarke

EVERY 10 DAYS, another action-packed episode of *Avengers* comes out of Pinewood studios—faster than a train at its dream-factory best. Inside the huge dark hangar, crowded with sets and technicians, the mood is streamlined and seemingly effortless. They are inside their element, working within their budget. And on the periphery of all this efficient, whirring, purring publicity machine is shooting Joanna Lumley towards stardom. She is confused.

Joanna, 30, is adamant about not being or becoming a star. On the other hand she realises that stardom marks the peak of an actor's career that is something to which she has been aspiring to for 12 years. But she says: "I'm beginning to understand Robert Redford. He sits in Utah steadfastly and determinedly defending his privacy. He hides, make believe like him that I'm back in a world where we belonged to the ground, to the earth; mattered nothing, whether it was going to rain or snow.

"When you think that I am, or shortly shall be, appearing in 122 different countries, probably speaking 35 different languages, it's an inhuman and completely disproportionate to what an actor can do. Thousands of millions of people will have access to even my name, but I'll never even know their names.

"I try so hard to be even-keeled and normal about this fame. I understand, but people recognise me like they recognise a Beatles record. It gets to the point where I'm on a shopping expedition and I don't know just run quietly on whether I'm going to buy fish or potatoes for dinner, I don't know how I'll cope. Then perhaps more interesting is what happens when all that fame goes away. I hope I will say that I'll say: 'Thank goodness.' After all, it's only a job. I thought this part was going to be internationally famous and I couldn't say 'Thank you, but no'—but I didn't, of course."/>

'You're perfectly awful, darling. But perhaps after a m

continued/Joanna Lumley is a looker. Long, lean-legged, strong throat, fine square shoulders and a mop of shiny, well-bobbed hair. She is instinctive and intelligent, too, but like most beautiful women she sets her looks at naught and highlights her faults. She says she wished when she looked in the mirror she felt she looked half-way human, that her skin didn't look like the close-ups we all saw of Lunar craters.

Purdey, as Jack Charlton has been explaining in *TVTimes*, is the name of the most revered and expensive shotgun in the world, a piece of superb hand-fashioned weaponry. Just like Purdey, the character Joanna plays in *The New Avengers*. Joanna dismisses her own connections in high places (Lumley is the family name of the Earls of Scarborough to whom she is distantly related) with a slight grimace and a wave of the hand. The same goes for what she calls her "plummy" accent and the rich, glamorous and titled people with whom she has been associated—the Earl of Lichfield, Brian, brother of Earl Alexander of Tunis . . . "I've lots of friends from all kinds of backgrounds, and that's that. My parents always impressed on me that race, class and religion mean nothing. And as for my voice—if I'd been brought up in China I'd speak perfect Chinese."

But there are aspects of Joanna's background that she does cherish—the love and cushioning support her parents have given her throughout her life and an early sense, which she learned from them, of the gusto and romance of living. She was born in Srinagar, Kashmir. Her father was a major in the Gurkhas. They left India for Hongkong at the time of partition in 1947. They spent three years there, came back to England for a year and went off to Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, for another three years. They returned again to England for two years—her father was "war-officing" by this time—and just as the family was going off once more to Malaya, Joanna's father decided

he'd had enough of army life and left the service.

"My father first went off into the jungle to fight when I was about six," says Joanna. "You're very fickle at that age. When he came back with a beard, six months later, my elder sister and I were shy, perhaps even wary of him. My mother had then to weave us and him gently back together again. As this was happening he'd have to be off again. It must have been agony for him, for he loved us more than life itself. As I got older it worried me a bit. I looked so much like he did as a boy and identified with him so. These separations broke his heart and were in the end his reason for giving up army life."

THIS was the only shadow in a blissfully happy childhood. She still remembers the excitement that would break loose about every three years or so, when her father was given a new posting: deciding what to take and what to leave behind, before they set off on their trek halfway across the world. Birthdays were extra special because May 1—Joanna's birthday—always coincided with the army sailing dates.

"Once your senses have been exposed to the Far East," she says, "you yearn for the night noises of the tropics, for hot dusty roads, for monsoons, for flowers that blossom and die in a night, trees that grow 4 ft. in a week, great ships that put into port and are gone just as suddenly, the slums, the movement . . ." Even now when she hears such words as "On the road to Mandalay" or "When dawn comes up like thunder", her stomach twists and flies back to those magical years.

In between getting "B" marks for looking bumptious and nearly getting expelled for smoking as head boarder at St Mary's Anglican Convent near Hastings, in Sussex, school was the only time Joanna, a "fat, spotty and thoroughly dreary adolescent", wanted to be the same as everybody else. Today, while not wishing to sound at all grand, she sympathises

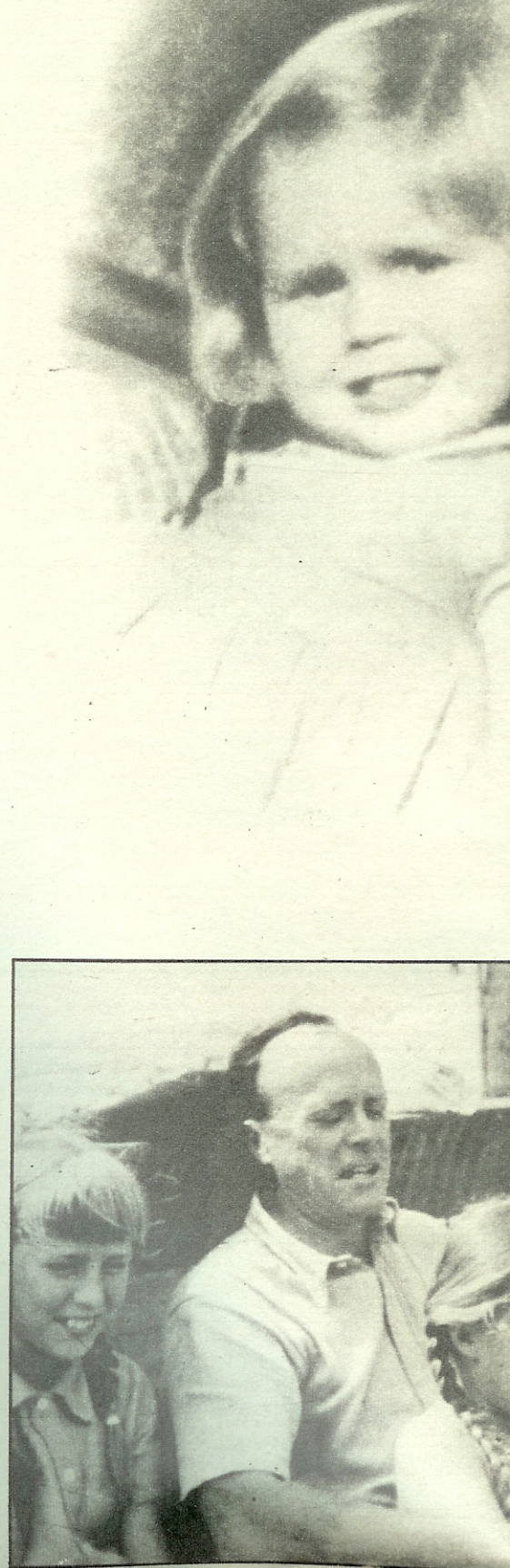
with the pompous Prince of Arragon in *The Merchant of Venice* who says: "I will not jump with common spirits and rank me with the barbarous multitude."

"My God, I see his point," says Joanna, "when I look around me and see the uniformity we're all being driven into these days."

School was also a place where she passed a lot of exams on very little work. The university entrance test brought her come-uppance. She could no longer get by with one night's swotting. But hadn't she been the leading light of the school's dramatic society? Always playing men's parts because of her height and inspired by a buxom 56-year-old teacher called Mrs. Curran? "She played Katharina to my Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew*. It was a key experience. Suddenly she changed into a petulant 22-year-old. No make-up, no props, nothing. 'That's what it's all about,' I remember thinking, 'believing it, not tricking yourself up with false noses.'"

So off she went to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art where, as she puts it, they gave her the "big E". Back at home Joanna got a job as a £5-a-week shop assistant—until one day a chicken-wristed woman, thin white hands, long red fingernails and wrapped in a large fur coat, swanned in. Wasn't that what Lumley wanted to be—Lumley who was still at the rosy cheeks and gum boots stage? So back she went to London with modelling in mind. Joanna claims she got a cool reception when she knocked on the door of the Lucie Clayton's model school: "You're perfectly awful, darling. But perhaps after a month or so with us—£12 a month, mornings only—we might be able to do something with you . . ."

Scavengingly hard times followed when Joanna catwalked in Debenham and Freebody's model suit department for £8 a week. Lunch was a 5p saveloy, occasionally washed down with a cup of coffee, in a snack bar at Oxford Circus. It was an investment of a



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Pictures from an Avenger girl's scrapbook: Joanna, aged two, in Kashmir; on the beach back in Britain in 1954 with her father James and sister Aelene; above, in 1970, Joanna with her own son James, named after Joanna's father. She says of her parents that they gave her an early sense of the gusto and romance of life.

kind, because while she was there she would pocket sandwiches discarded by other people. That provided food for her and the three girls with whom she shared a flat. In 1964, London was buzzing with such names as Jean Muir ("she taught me what perfection was," says Joanna), Jean Shrimpton (every girl's idol at the time, including Joanna's), Mary Quant, Bill Gibb . . . and suddenly the career of Joanna Lumley, photographic model, took off—*Queen* magazine, *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Nova*, the national press, TV commercials. "Three years," she says, "averaging £120 a week, four or five jobs a day, working in every country in Europe and never saving a penny." In 1967 she discovered

that she was pregnant. There was no question of marriage. She had already broken up with the father of the child, a commercial photographer whose name she says she'll never reveal. Her son James, who's now nine, was named after her own father. "He's the most splendid child, and has never been one to howl in my skirts," she says. Joanna was six months recovering her own health. "My parents were and are everything to me. If they ever had any feelings other than pride, joy and excitement about this the most naked and vulnerable period of my life, they never let me know. "I remember thinking, strapped up and alone in the hospital as I was having

James—my parents had been asked to leave because I was so small and the staff really didn't think James would be born that night—'God! How I wish . . . how I need someone. Someone who knows my story. Someone to say, 'hang on, I'm here.' There's nothing more important to having babies than having the father around. "Everyone says I'm tough now. It's terrible. I go off and weep copiously about it. In the end you're the one who's left to mend the fuses, empty the dustbin, sit up all night because your child has mumps and go off to work the next day. 'You can manage,' people say. The thing is you have to manage. There's no point in my lying on the ground kicking my heels and saying I can't do it, because at the end of all that you get up, wipe your face and do it. Nobody else will. My son is my first priority. If that's being tough then I suppose I'm tough. I can't see any other way to be." And tough was the special training she underwent for *The New Avengers*. "If we'd found Joanna Lumley when she was about nine," says Brian Clemens, writer and producer of the series, "she'd have won a couple of Olympic gold medals at Montreal, this year." Joanna—she got her colours at all the various sports at her school—runs, rides, skis, fences, can spin a car on a sixpence, ride motor-bikes and go through the assault course at Aldershot alongside paratroopers—swinging off platforms on ropes, smashing down to the ground, flying into nets and high-wire walking between trees. "But everyone was a bit perturbed the day I walked along the gable of a four-storey house," says Joanna. "If you really must do this stunt yourself," said Ray Austin, resident director and ex-stuntman himself, "then hang on with your hands—and crawl!" "But it wouldn't have been *Avenger*-woman style to have crawled," says Joanna. "This woman's so fast," says Austin, "I've had to reconstruct the action shots to make sure my crew

get them in one take damage so far? Just bruises and pulled for Joanna. Before shooting *The New Avengers* was sent on a course to learn to ride bikes, and fight. Cyd Child rigged a gymnasium at Pine Gareth Hunt's and extended fitness programme. Cyd is the current Women's Judo Champion (she's the first female arranger). The course set them both up slightly less strenuous her own—an hour every day starting minute shuttle runs and Joanna left the training daggers at crawling back in the next day. Joanna's additional hour's session each day she learned karate from Susuki, one of the top exponents. Cyd Child, who played series as a stuntwoman Diana Rigg was also has also devised a method of fighting for Joanna. It is based on French martial art. "Purdey's fighting style," says Cyd, "is elegant but lethal. As an ex-Purdey's strength lies in thighs and feet, and the way she fights thrown in the o kung fu or karate-t Purdey rarely uses force but once every five or so she lashes out right fist." Joanna Lumley, in a towelling robe, only hope it comes frightening on the screen it has been for me to these action sequences I was choking either fear or exertion will look rather nonchalant suave on screen."

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get them in one take." The damage so far? Just a few bruises and pulled muscles for Joanna.

Before shooting started on *The New Avengers* Joanna was sent on a two-week course to learn to ride motorbikes, and fight arranger Cyd Child rigged up a gymnasium at Pinewood for Gareth Hunt's and Joanna's extended fitness training programme. Cyd is the first and current Women's European Judo Champion (she's also the first female fight arranger). The circuit she set them both was only slightly less strenuous than her own—an hour a day every day starting with 10-minute shuttle runs. Hunt and Joanna left the gym looking daggers at her but crawled back in again the next day. Joanna had an additional hour's ballet session each day and Hunt learned karate from Mr. Susuki, one of this country's top exponents.

Cyd Child, who joined the series as a stuntwoman when Diana Rigg was avenging, has also devised a new style of fighting for Joanna's character. It is based on the old French martial art of Panache. "Purdey's fight form," says Cyd, "is elegant, balletic but lethal. As an ex-dancer Purdey's strength lies in her thighs and feet, and this is the way she fights. We've thrown in the occasional kung fu or karate-type kick. Purdey rarely uses her hands but once every five episodes or so she lashes out with her right fist."

Joanna Lumley, wrapped in a towelling robe, says: "I only hope it comes over as frightening on the screen as it has been for me to do. All these action sequences when I was choking either with fear or exertion will probably look rather nonchalant and suave on screen."

NEXT WEEK

Why Joanna will never do another nude scene . . . and the Avengers phone call that stopped her tears.

The lovely Miss Lumley... an Avenger fighting stardom

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EVERY 10 DAYS, another action-packed episode of *The New Avengers* comes out of Pinewood studios—faster than Hollywood at its dream-factory best. Inside the huge dark hangar of a studio, crowded with sets and technicians, the mood is calm, the work streamlined and seemingly effortless. They are inside their schedule and within their budget. And on the periphery of all this efficient industry a whirring, purring publicity machine is shooting Joanna Lumley starwards. She is confused.

Joanna, 30, is adamant about not being or becoming a star, but on the other hand realises that stardom marks the peak of an acting career and that is something to which she has been aspiring to for 12 years or more. But she says: "I'm beginning to understand Robert Redford living up in Utah steadfastly and determinedly defending his privacy. I want to hide, make believe like him that I'm back in a world where it mattered that we belonged to the ground, to the earth; mattered whether it was going to rain or snow.

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The Joanna Lumley Story
PART TWO



PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN PAUL

SIX MONTHS AFTER the birth of her son James, Joanna Lumley was ready to face life again, ready to attempt the leap into an acting career. She already had a rented, fashionable roof over her head, a six-roomed flat around the corner from such people as Anouska Hempel, Patrick Mower, John Cleese and Christopher Chataway in Holland Park, London. But she was at the bottom of her financial barrel. Eight months out of work became a year. Money had been easy-come, easy-go in her highly successful years as a top photographic model. Nine patchy years of going up and down like a yo-yo and living with a perpetually huge overdraft were to follow.

Her parents backed her to the hilt—pledging all their securities as collateral for their daughter—and it was they who mainly cared for James for the first two years. Joanna attributes her current success as an actress and as Purdey in *The New Avengers* to them and to actor Richard Johnson.

"Besides," says Joanna, who rarely does herself justice, "I couldn't have done anything else. I don't have the staying power to be a brain surgeon, or even to finish making a dress."

In the summer of 1968 she was at a party. Richard Johnson was among the guests. "If you want a bottle of milk," says Joanna, "you go find a milkman and ask him. Here was a man who was actually starring in a film. 'Gosh! How lovely!' I said. 'I'd like to be in a film.' 'Would you?' he said. 'Yes, please,' I said."

She then went on to say: "Yes, Mr. Robinson"—her only line—in the film *Some Girls Do* in which Johnson was then starring. It was two days' work and although he is no mammoth figure in her life Johnson did, she says, behave "extremely civilly" by advising her on getting an Equity card and an agent. She was launched.

That autumn Joanna got a part in the Diana Rigg/George Lazenby Bond film *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*—two months' work this time—and provided the voices for a gaggle of international Bond lovelies in accents ranging from Chinese to German and Norwegian. She had seven or eight lines to bite on in her next film *Tam-Lin* starring Ava Gardner, and by the spring of 1970 Joanna was starring in *The Breaking of Bumbo*. She was riding around town in a 1950 Silver Wraith Rolls-Royce and felt she'd sufficiently stabilised her finances to bring

James up from her parents' home in Kent, on a permanent basis. She was being heralded as "The Face of the Seventies."

The irony was that neither *Tam-Lin* nor *The Breaking of Bumbo* were shown in the cinemas. "Success, so called," says Joanna, "is like a treacherous lover. It's any place it wants to put you any time. When I got *Bumbo* I tried not to grin too much on the street but I came out of the film with nothing to show except a very small cheque."

One of the good things Joanna has to say about *The Breaking of Bumbo* is the way in which they handled her first nude scene. "It was beautifully lit, beautifully shot. They closed the set and gave me a bottle of champagne at lunchtime before I did the scene. 'Don't appear till you've drunk the lot!'" But her experience in her next film, *The Games Lovers Play*, makes her say today: "Nobody's going to shape me into any kind of on-screen intimacy any more."

About this time in her life, Joanna was feeling she'd like to be married, to have more children and lead a gloriously unsettled life all over the world with them all. She met comedy actor and writer Jeremy Lloyd—16 years her senior—on the set of *The Games Lovers Play*. Two weeks later they announced their engagement, two weeks later they married, four months later they parted and four months after that Lloyd was granted a decree of nullity.

"In print our marriage sounds more appalling and dramatic than it was," says Joanna. "Of course, it was a turbulent time for us both but there were no rows, no hurling of lamps. I don't know what went wrong except that we married too quickly and didn't give ourselves time to adapt to each other."

She and Lloyd remained the best of friends, often worked together and were seen wining and dining around town together afterwards. Her relationship with Rod Stewart in 1974 was over even more quickly. Two months, a Mediterranean cruise, and it was finished.

Today, in the suite which is her dressing room at Pinewood studios one wall is covered with photographs of her son and of actor Michael Kitchen. She and Kitchen have spent as much time together as possible since they met through Joanna's flatmate, actress Jane Carr, two years ago, when Carr and Kitchen were appearing in the National Theatre production of *Spring Awakening*. Kitchen is now in America "making a kill in *No Man's Land* with 'the two old sirs'—Sir John (Gielgud) and Sir Ralph (Richardson)—which leaves me very lonely." She is customarily circumspect about marriage:

"I've never seen myself double act or in harm's way. I see of marriage the way it becomes. Not because I don't love somebody enough because as a life style it's about as unattractive as any I can imagine. But that one day all I'll do is walk round with a wicker chair and make chair covers. Things have happened."

"But at the moment I'm in a movement, in change. My doors opening and shutting. A continual going-on."

In April, 1971, a couple of years after her divorce, Joanna was with the Marlow Theatre Company in *Not Now, Darling*.

"I thought," she says, "I'd do something humble. £20 a week, people would be real, stop thinking I was a starlet and start taking me seriously. Joanna was inching down the trail."

"I did *The End of the Road* at Greenwich last year because I wanted to be like the Osborne play and watch the wings watching the wings. Roberts and Jill Bennett at Greenwich is 'snob'—that a few lines in a play can change people's opinion. I had a chance." When her little laboratory assistant was sent Price film *The A-Team* *Phibes* (chosen again because of the girly image) she was on the cutting-room floor put to her profession.

Things began looking better, especially at least, when she had her West End debut in *Just Lie There—Say Goodnight* with Brian Rix and Alfred Lunt in September, 1971. (Just before she had been turned down for *The Avengers*.) During the filming the BBC was filming the BBC *It's Awfully Bad For You, Darling*—"a gruelling experience." These 10 weeks were interspersed with illness and hospital operation, culminating in a period of exhaustion. She was in the show and retreated to her parents' home first to her parents' home and then with relatives to Switzerland.

At the end of summer she was back in the fray with a play called *The Satanic Rites*. After that came the play *Don't Just Lie There—Say Goodnight*, which, says Joanna, was viewed as "more horrible" than *Exorcist*. In June, 1972, eight episodes of a more serious *Coronation Street* were written by Perkins, the girl Ken. She didn't work /com

My years of champagne, nudity and tears

Joanna Lumley looked lovely on the pages of *Vogue* magazine; she looked perfect at film premieres. In reality, nine years in showbusiness have been harrowing for her.

In this, the second and final part of her story, Joanna tells Valerie Clarke how *The New Avengers* dried her tears

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"I thought," she says, "that if I did something humble in rep. for £20 a week, people might think I was real, stop thinking of me as a starlet and start taking me seriously." Joanna was inching her way along the trail.

"I did *The End of Me Or Cigar* at Greenwich last year not just because I wanted to be in a new John Osborne play and wanted to sit in the wings watching the lovely Rachel Roberts and Jill Bennett, but because Greenwich is 'snob' and I thought that a few lines in a *deep* play would change people's opinion of me. No chance." When her part as a glum little laboratory assistant in the Vincent Price film *The Abominable Dr. Phibes* (chosen again to get away from the girly image) ended up on the cutting-room floor, the seal was put to her professional cynicism.

Things began looking up, financially at least, when she made her West End debut in the farce *Don't Just Lie There—Say Something* with Brian Rix and Alfred Marks in September, 1971. (Just before this she'd been turned down for the role of Emma Peel in the stage adaptation of *The Avengers*.) During the day she was filming the BBC comedy series *It's Awfully Bad For Your Eyes, Darling*—"a gruelling but necessary experience." These 10 months, interspersed with illness and a stomach operation, culminated in nervous exhaustion. She was forced to leave the show and retreat for two months first to her parents' home and then with relatives to Switzerland.

At the end of summer, 1972, she was back in the fray making a film called *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*. After that came the film version of *Don't Just Lie There—Say Something*, which, says Joanna, was reviewed as "more horrific than *The Exorcist*". In June, 1973, she did eight episodes (a month's work) for *Coronation Street* playing Elaine Perkins, the girl Ken Barlow fell for. She didn't work /continued overleaf

y years of ampagne, dity d tears

mley looked lovely on the pages magazine; she looked perfect mieres. In reality, in showbusiness have been for her. second and final part of Joanna tells Valerie Clarke how Avengers dried her tears

‘Somehow I land on my feet but only when I’ve all but lost my nerve’

continued from page 11/
for five months after that till
in December she did six
episodes (three weeks’ work)
for *General Hospital*. The
roughest times were to
come.

In two and a half years
she did nothing memorable
except the Greenwich play,
the first of the comedy series
The Cuckoo Waltz and a
couple of episodes of *Call
My Bluff*. She even re-
registered with the Peter
Hope Lumley (no relation)
modelling agency. Then
showbiz headlines blazed
with the news that she had
been chosen as *The New
Avengers* girl.

“You say to yourself,”
says Joanna Lumley, “I
won’t make that mistake
again, won’t get as depres-
sed again. I vow I won’t
weep about money because
it’s only money. But the
times I’ve sat thinking,
‘What on earth can I do?’
with tears racing down my
face. Months and months
out of work begging people
to do a £10 a week lunch-
time play and getting no
replies, writing off to all the
reps and getting no replies
—and this was only last
year, not when I began nine
years ago. Somehow I land
on my feet but only when
I’ve all but lost my nerve
and am thinking ‘I’m under
for good this time.’”

“If there’s any glamour
I’ve yet to discover it. Being
an actress is slog, slog, slog.
What is sometimes glamor-
ous is the finished product
but even that—the Holly-
wood dream—is infinitely
less magical now.”

An Avenger dressed to kill



*She’s cool and beautiful.
Whatever she wears,
she’s ultra-feminine.
And can she fight! Those
long legs can dispatch
a dozen villains
whatever she is
wearing. Purdey is
dressed to kill
whether it be a
feminine, frilled
and flowing
dress—or her
“early morning”
jump suit. Just for
the record, Joanna is
5ft. 8in. tall and
her vital statistics
are 34-24-35.*

Yellow batik pattern
silk dress, designed
by Katherine
Buckley. The skirt,
in pleated chiffon,
has two frills and
repeats pattern. The
top is gathered at
the waist and has
ties at each shoulder.
Worn with cream
silk scarf with lion
motif as pattern.
“Delightful to wear
on a summer
evening for dinner,”
said Joanna.





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Velvet pin-stripe
suit in mauve, with
black trilby. Worn
with white shirt,
striped with mauve
and lavender. "It
made me feel very
elegant," said
Joanna.



Navy blue underwear, by
Janet Reger. Lace bra. Satin
corset with lace-ups at the
front. Satin suspender belt.



Joanna
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blue underwear, by
ger. Lace bra. Satin
with lace-ups at the
atin suspender belt.

Red, green and blue Lurex
dress, designed by Katherine
Buckley. Velvet top with
Lurex dangle pieces
attached to large
buttons at the
shoulder. Wrap-over
skirt with draw
strings to hitch
up skirt to
reveal legs and
allow freer
movement.

Velvet pin-stripe
suit in mauve, with
black trilby. Worn
with white shirt,
striped with mauve
and lavender. "It
made me feel very
elegant," said
Joanna.

Joanna felt "com-
pletely relaxed"
in the kimono—
in orange, black,
green, red and
yellow flower
print silk.
Buttons on
one side,
otherwise
loose. Sleeves
long with
side slits.

Black cotton jump
suit, with lion
Avenger motif and
the name Purdey
trimmed in white
and red. White polo-
necked jumper worn
underneath, with
motor-cycle gloves
and long boots. "I
always felt very
athletic wearing
that," said Joanna.