

Star scene spotlights

Superguy

GARETH HUNT



AT THIS precise moment there are probably over a million girls around the world who would give their eye teeth to jump into Purdey's shoes!

Purdey? She's the girl in "The New Avengers" who gets to team up with Gambit . . . and it is Gambit, played by Gareth Hunt, who is drawing these world-wide sighs! He is the latest superguy to send heartbeats pounding through the speed barrier, and when you see the kind of life Gareth had before he picked up a gun and became a New Avenger, you'll see that there is little difference between Gareth and Gambit!

"People always think that foreign travel is an exciting adventure, don't they?" he says. "I wonder if one of the earlier convicts shipped to Australia, or a slave carted off to the cotton fields felt it was exciting?"

"What I'm getting at is that travel is a different thing to different people, and we all do it for different reasons."

"No?" I joined the Merchant Navy because I thought it was exciting. As close to real adventure as I could get. Was it? Yes, it was. But it was also a very tough life with a lot of work and very little time off. When there's time off, there's not much you can do aboard a boat except swing in your hammock!

"But I enjoyed a life on the ocean wave if only for the exotic places we visited. Places like the Far East and the West Indies. I used to really use my free time and travel all over the place, trying to get to know something of the place instead of just the tourist-spots."

"It was a world of difference from Battersea, in London, where I had grown

up. I left school earlier than a lot of kids do nowadays and I suppose I was a bit of a tearaway. I yearned for some kind of adventure and I guess the idea of becoming a merchant seaman fitted my dream. I'd loved pirate films as a kid and I suppose I was, in a way, fulfilling the wish to have been around in those times. I always read a lot about explorers, too, so going to sea was an adventure.

"But it wore stale after a few years. I longed to get my feet on dry land again, so I jumped ship when we reached port in New Zealand.

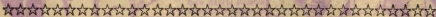
"It was the start of a real-life chase for me, because the ship authorities were on the lookout for me and a mate of mine who had joined me. It was a bit of a laugh at the time, and I took a number of dead-end jobs to put food in my mouth and give me a bed for the night.

"But eventually we were discovered and I was shipped back to England. It was then, after a number of jobs, that I landed a backstage job in a theatre. It fired in me the idea that I would like to be an actor.

"Boy, did I have to work hard! But I enjoyed every minute of my training. When I was qualified as an actor, I toured the country with some of the well known theatre groups and then got my break into television. It was 'Upstairs, Downstairs' where I played the footman.

"From that, and the interest the audience showed in me, for which I'm eternally grateful, I got the part of Gambit.

"It's an exciting role with some really dangerous stunts to do in the series . . . pure fantasy . . . and I love every minute of it!"



WHAT DO THE STARS HOLD FOR STARKSY? We tell you next week!