

Where are you today?
I'm heading home to do a read through for one of the episodes of Bridgerton over Zoom.

How have you found doing Zoom read-throughs?
I find doing Zoom anything fairly tedious. Creatively, it's tedious. I like to be in the room. I like to be with the people I'm working with. I have directed stuff over Zoom, I've spoken to mass audiences over Zoom and done all sorts of weird and wonderful things. Zoom - whoever knew such a phrase existed years ago? We're in a completely different world.

And you are narrating Château DIY. How are your renovating skills?

Well, I moved into a squat in Brixton in 1984. At the time Lambeth Council were

SIXTY SECONDS

THE BRIDGERTON STAR, 58, TALKS DIY SKILLS, CHOOSING A CHÂTEAU FOR LADY DANBURY AND MEETING HER PUNK HEROINE, JOAN JETT

INTERVIEW BY PAUL SIMPER

With Adjoa Andoh



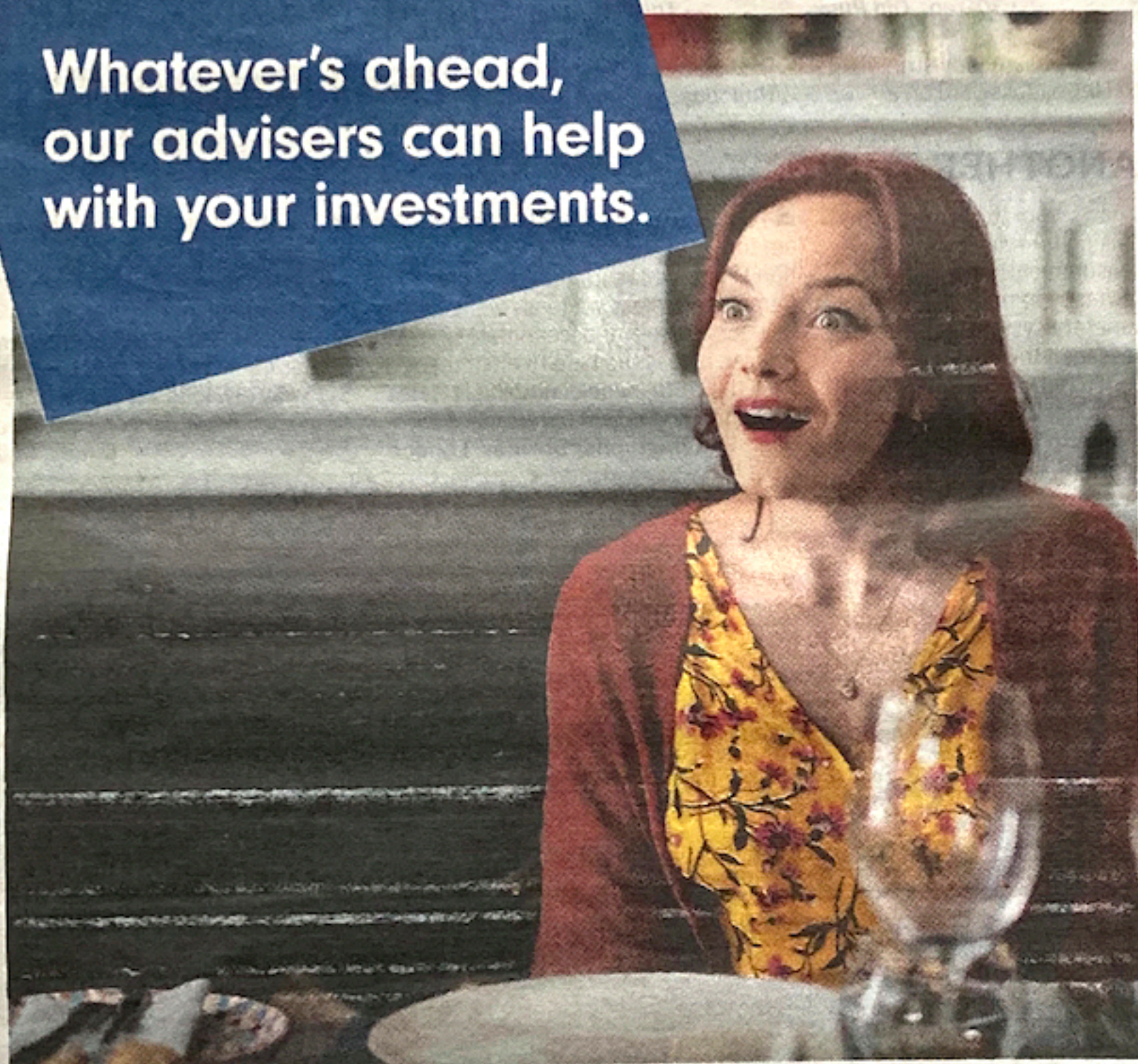
High standards:
As Lady Danbury

amazingly handing out grants and you were overseen by an architect. I learned how to lay concrete floors, hang ceilings, do plastering and a bit of terrible bricklaying. I can do a

little bit of plumbing, clamber on roofs and dig things out, and make window frames and door frames. I was young and full of go. I love building work. In another life I'd have loved to have been an architect. My nephew is an architect. I'm jealous.



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So Château DIY is a perfect show for you?

It ticks all sorts of boxes for me. I love France. I used to go there on holiday a lot when I was a kid. My mum was a history teacher so I love all the château-y elements of it. The people are just fascinating - the courage to throw their lives up in the air and go. 'Right, this is it! We're sinking all the cash in. We're off to France' and then making a go of it.

What have been your favourite episodes this series?

One couple find an old postcard from 100 years ago of the château they bought. It appears to have a turret that's no longer there so they go and buy reclaimed bricks and they get a hoist and get up there. He used to do something with engineering so he solders all this sheet metal. It sounds like it's going to be really naff but they make this beautiful turret in keeping with the building. Then they invite the whole village to come up and the mayor comes. It's really moving.

Is there any château that would suit either you or Lady Danbury?

Obviously Lady Danbury would go for a massive pile. I'd go for something a little more bijou and small. There are ones where they have rediscovered a lake that has been covered in rubbish for ages. There is another where they discover a tennis court. I think I would probably go more seven-bedroom than 57-bedroom château.

With voiceover, no one cares if you have a boil on your face as long as your voice is in order

Is one of the joys of narrating a TV show not having to be in hair, make-up and wardrobe at the crack of dawn as you are with Bridgerton?

Yes, absolutely. You can just turn up as you are and nobody cares if you've got a massive boil on your face as long as your voice is in good working order. And it is usually at a civilised hour. Tomorrow morning I will be leaving the house at half past four. But I'm not complaining. It's a great job and I'm very lucky to have it.

What was it like for the first day back on Bridgerton after such massive success?

Coming back for season two, we were thrilled. I think everyone felt extremely grateful for the success of the show, to actually be in work. I see so many pals who have just been having the most terrible time, especially if you're a theatre actor or musician. I've been doing the Proms and the number of musicians who have not been able to earn a living because their work is live performance... I feel hugely privileged.

You played second violin in the school orchestra and cello in a jazz trio. Do you still play instruments?

I still play for my own pleasure but it wouldn't be for anyone else's listening pleasure. I love it. All I ever wanted to be was a kick-ass bass player in a punk band. I recently spoke to Joan Jett from Joan Jett And The Blackhearts. We've got a mutual friend. I was absolutely gibbering with delight to talk to her. She's one of those women that did the thing I would have loved to have. I still have a dusty violin, a dusty cello and a piano in my house. My brother is a musician, my nephew is a musician, my dad was a musician, my grandmother was a musician. I am just, like with my building skills, enthusiastic.

Do you keep any mementos from jobs?

Yes, if my house was on Château DIY you would be going, 'That's got to go.' I still have the trousers from my first ever job from April 1984. I have a cupboard called The Cupboard of Doom that nobody can go near because if you open the door you will not get the door shut again. I have to go through it because at some point I am going to die and my children are going to go, 'What the hell is that? Bin it!' My husband has strong feelings about all the junk. His tastes are very aesthetic and sparse, and mine are sort of Steptoe And Son, really.



Punk legend:
Joan Jett

Andoh narrates Château DIY, Channel 4, weekdays at 4pm from September 27