

FAME AND FORTUNE ANNETTE BADLAND

I still live in the home I bought 40 years ago for £47,000

The actress has gone from selling broken biscuits at Woolworths and earning £33 a week at the Royal Shakespeare Company to shooting *Ted Lasso* for Apple TV, writes *York Membery*

Annette Badland was born in Birmingham in 1950 and has been in everything from *Bergerac* to *Doctor Who*, playing the motorbike-riding pathologist Fleur Perkins in *Midsomer Murders*, the devious Babe Smith in *EastEnders* and the foul-mouthed pub landlady Mae in *Ted Lasso*. Now 75, she lives in east London. Her longtime partner, the actor David Hatton, died in 2024.

How much is in your wallet?

I've got £23 and a handful of smaller coins. I put my spare change in my china piggy bank Stan, who wears black trousers and a T-shirt. The trouble is that banks don't want change now, so I once had to trawl round branches over a ten-mile radius before finding one with a machine that would gobble up coins, spit a few out and allow me to put the money in my account. No fun.

I've largely stopped using cash since a young TV production assistant laughed at me for being "old-style" when I opened my purse to take out coins to buy a coffee. But I do still carry some so that I can give it to someone in need.

What credit cards do you use?

My favourite bit of plastic is my Marks and Sparks card – M&S is also still my first port of call when I'm shopping for clothes. I'm a bit cross with British Airways, though, because it demoted me from a silver BA card to a bronze BA card and now a blue card. I feel absolutely bereft when I press my nose up against the window of a BA lounge and see everyone drinking champagne.

Are you a saver or a spender?

I've been a saver ever since my schooldays, when I started paying into a children's account at the Midshires Bank. I've always been quite independent too, and felt that if I had money put away I would not have to rely on anyone else financially.

My last big expense? A pack of

five gloves costing a fiver that I bought to keep my hands warm after swimming. I love to swim naked in the sea in summer – a wonderful sensation.

Do you own a property?

The first property I bought, while appearing in *Bergerac* in the 1980s, was actually for my parents, not me. They were in a tied cottage on a farm in the Midlands, Dad was getting older and I wanted them not to worry about being thrown out. The cost? An immense £17,000. Around the same time my partner, David, and I began looking for somewhere to buy. We couldn't afford a mucky cupboard in Finchley, north London, where we were renting. So in 1986 we bought a three-bedroom Victorian terraced house in Woodford Green, east London, for £47,000 – again, thanks to *Bergerac*, my first regular television role. I'm still here 40-plus years later, though it's worth about £500,000 now. I'm quite an anomaly living where I do – many of my actor friends are in west London.

Are you better off than your parents?

Oh yes. I grew up an only child in Birmingham, and we lived in



AMY SUSSMAN/GETTY IMAGES



Annette Badland was in *Bergerac*, left, and the new *Midsomer Murders*, below

quite lucrative. For the last couple of series I got to work in the Channel Islands too. Having a recurring part in a television series makes a big difference, and American-financed TV series I've worked on like Netflix's *Run Away* and Apple TV's *Ted Lasso* have paid particularly well.

I love working on *Midsomer Murders* too. We're shooting four new episodes, but I couldn't survive just on my *Midsomer* earnings. There have been around 60 murders since I joined the show – that's probably why house prices are so low in Midsomer county!

Do you invest in shares?

Not really, they frighten me; I'm too nervous a person to invest in them.

What's best for retirement – property or pension?

I suspect property, but I paid into an Equity pension scheme which has been very good. I'm also old enough to get my state pension. That said, I have no plans to retire unless my brain stops working and I can't remember my lines. Thankfully I'm still in demand as an actress.

What has been your best business decision?

To pursue acting, despite my parents' misgivings. Growing up when they did, they thought of acting as scary, but I stuck to my guns; they would rather I'd have become a teacher. I think it's harder for someone from my background to make it as an actor today than it was 50-odd years ago.

Your best investment?

My dad bought me my first car in the mid-1970s – a used, half-timbered Morris Minor Traveller. It was £100, and he paid for it with his redundancy money. I drove it everywhere, from the Isle of Skye to Cornwall, over 20 years. But, alas, it's now stationary in my garage. I'd love to get it revamped but think that could be expensive.

What about your worst investment?

A £180 barbecue that's never been used, partly because I didn't know how to set it up. In truth, I'd rather go to other people's barbecues than get covered in smoke and end up with ash in my eyes.

What's your money weakness?

Books, garden bulbs and plants. I must spend hundreds of pounds a year on books and they're stacked up all over the house. I find it hard to get rid of them, because they become like old friends, reminding me of certain times in my life. I'm always falling for plants too, and can often be found bent over a border in my garden.

Your most extravagant purchase?

Taking three-week holidays to places such as Greece and Turkey, which I started doing with my partner, David, in the 1990s, because I'm a bit of a workaholic. I still think there is something rather luxurious about taking a three-week holiday.

What's your financial priority?

To keep on working so as to be able to support the causes close to my heart.

What if you won the lottery?

It would be horrific, wouldn't it? I would not know what to do with it, though I'm sure everyone would be offering me all sorts of advice. I'd probably buy a property with a bigger garden. I'd also make a generous donation to Brooke, a charity supporting working animals and the ways in which they can be lifelines for women in some of the world's poorest communities.

What's the most important lesson you've learnt about money?

The importance of sharing it. Yes, I'm a saver. But I also think money is to be used rather than hoarded. I'm not the sort of person who counts their coins every day. Annette Badland is women's ambassador for the working animal charity *thebrooke.org*



When I was at acting school Mum used to send tights and soap. She once sent a salad. By the time it got to me it was just wet lettuce

a ground-floor flat in a big Edwardian house with an outdoor loo next to the coal bunker. Sometimes we shared a can of soup between us.

My mother, Sue, met my father, Ted, at a secret Second World War aircraft factory in sandstone caves near Kidderminster. She came from a mining family in Scotland, while he had worked at Rover cars. Later we moved to Tamworth, northwest of Birmingham, where Dad worked on the Reliant Robin production line. "Never buy one," he once warned me. Then, lo and behold, I ended up driving one of the three-wheeled cars in *EastEnders*. It kept stalling and they eventually had to tie a rope to the bumper to get it moving.

What did you earn last year?

Enough to keep the taxman happy.

What was your first job?

Working as a Saturday girl on the broken biscuit counter at Woolworths while still a schoolgirl. My first acting job was in a repertory theatre at Southwold, where I appeared in plays like *Private Lives*, on £12 a week; but it got me my Equity card [membership to the actor's union]. Incidentally, the first word I uttered on stage in

front of a paying audience was "merde!" – I was playing a French maid.

When did you first feel wealthy?

I have never felt wealthy – I associate that word with class or business success. But I am fortunate to have enjoyed a long acting career and have never taken my success for granted.

Have you ever worried about making ends meet?

Yes, when I was studying drama at the East 15 Acting School in Loughton, Essex, money was so tight that one of our tutors drove as many of us as he could get in his car to Smithfield on a Friday night to buy cheap meat. Mum used to send me tights and soap to help me out too. Once she even sent me a salad in a Tupperware box, wrapped in paper, but when it reached me it was just wet lettuce – not very appetising. But life wasn't easy for me as a young theatre actress either; I earned £33 a week at the RSC in Stratford-upon-Avon in the early 1970s.

Your most lucrative work?

Playing Charlotte, the secretary at the Bureau des Étrangers, in *Bergerac* for three years was



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