



The long-haired Lumley

Gone . . . the Fringe on top

# JEAN ROOK

**I**N THEORY, Joanna Lumley is fearless and bra-less. She's Women's Lib at its libbest. At 21, she had a son by a man she's never named. At 31, she's just given the spike-heeled boot to her three-year-old romance with actor Michael Kitchen.

Among all this, she's been briefly married, has spurned 53 proposals and damped down Rod Stewart to an old flame. In real red-blooded life, Ms Lumley pales even Purdey—the girl she plays in Thames TV's "The New Avengers"—to a shadow.

This daughter of a former Indian army major is 5ft 10in, with legs like rapiers and, if you don't know her, you expect to come up against pure steel and endless gut.

When you do know her, Jo Lumley strikes you—like a netball in the eye—with her innocent, school-girlish quality. Her face is as open and well-scrubbed as a bare knee above a white sock. She's hockey-stick thin, with an accent like an Enid Blyton sports captain. You bet she was The Most Popular Girl in the Fifth, and you're dying to be her best chum.

A year ago, almost to the spring day, Ms Lumley said of Michael Kitchen: "I'd marry him tomorrow if he asked me or, if he said wait until we're 60, I'd wait. I love him more than life itself."

So what happened "Gosh, did I say that?" said Ms Lumley, who mixes her convent-educated "goshes" and "gollies" with her even more outdoor language. "Well, if I said it—I know I do rabbit on a bit—I must have meant it at the time.

"Unless someone got me wrong. I once said I loved Rod Stewart to death and it came out that I'll love him till I die. That's about as daft as the myth that I'm always attracted to lorry drivers." Miss Lumley—who did love Mr Kitchen somewhere between life and death—has had a week which would drive a lot of women under a lorry.

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ten-year-old son, Jamie's  
father ("that would be  
rotten — like ringing him  
up and saying, 'It's about  
time you bought his  
shoes'"), she won't talk  
about the actual crack-up  
of her love affair.

**O**NLY about sweep-  
ing up the bits.  
"It's like when  
someone dies, there  
has to be a period  
of mourning," she told me  
yesterday, looking right  
for the part in a funeral-  
black frilly frock.

"You can't just pretend  
it never happened. There  
has to be a certain amount  
of chuntering and weeping  
and wailing and rocking to  
and fro.

"Then you've got to get  
over it. I mean, you can't  
let yourself be over-  
whelmed, can you? We all  
have our black holes of  
despair. You just have to  
stick a bit of plywood over  
the hole and step across it.

"I'm using my energy  
trying to mend my vacuum  
cleaner now there's no one  
to do it. I suppose I could  
end up a cat-ridden old bat  
with my broken Hoover,  
but I'm keeping my end up.

"I'm a very cheerful sort  
really and I do think it's a  
duty not to get yourself  
down, and drag others  
along with you.

"I terribly believe in

being happy and trying to  
make others feel the same.  
Once a year, I think every-  
one should be fined if they  
don't do something adven-  
turous and fun—like trying  
to get to the Taj Mahal on  
a bicycle or something."

How much is Ms Lumley  
really like fancy-free, man-  
chopping Purdey, and how  
much does that help?

"I'm like her in some  
things—I have my princi-  
ples, and stand up for  
them.

**I**'M not like Purdey in  
that she's immensely  
detached and cool  
with men. I adore  
them—just at the  
moment I think they're  
frightful but I still adore  
them.

"Purdey could live with-  
out a man. She's glossy,  
glamorous. She never gets  
bogged down with stuff like  
laying her kitchen lino. She  
never rips her clothes—if I  
buy something the hem's  
down before I get it home.

"I couldn't be as glossy

and resilient — though  
people think I am—as she  
is, but she has to be. It  
would never do if viewers  
saw Purdey eating baked  
beans or having a hard  
time."

**W**HAT Ms Lumley  
lost, in love, during  
last week's hard  
time, she gained in  
professional  
stature.

It's just been announced  
that "The New Avengers"  
has sold to America, coast  
to coast, on C.B.S. net-  
work.

This will make Purdey—  
as it did Diana Rigg's  
Emma Peel in the old  
Avengers—a household face  
on 71 million U.S. tele-  
vision screens.

"It's marvellous news—  
that and the decision to go  
on with the Avengers and  
make 13 more episodes,"  
she enthused.

When she's keen, she  
always looks 15 and as if  
she's just been picked for  
the first eleven.

"Actually, they haven't

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to do Purdey yet, so I'm  
just sort of presuming. Sit-  
ting here waiting, like a  
jilted bride at the altar  
and occasionally turning  
my head to see if some-  
one's coming."

Right now, the head is  
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Purdey's famous Fringe on  
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That's what I mean.  
"I don't think so be-  
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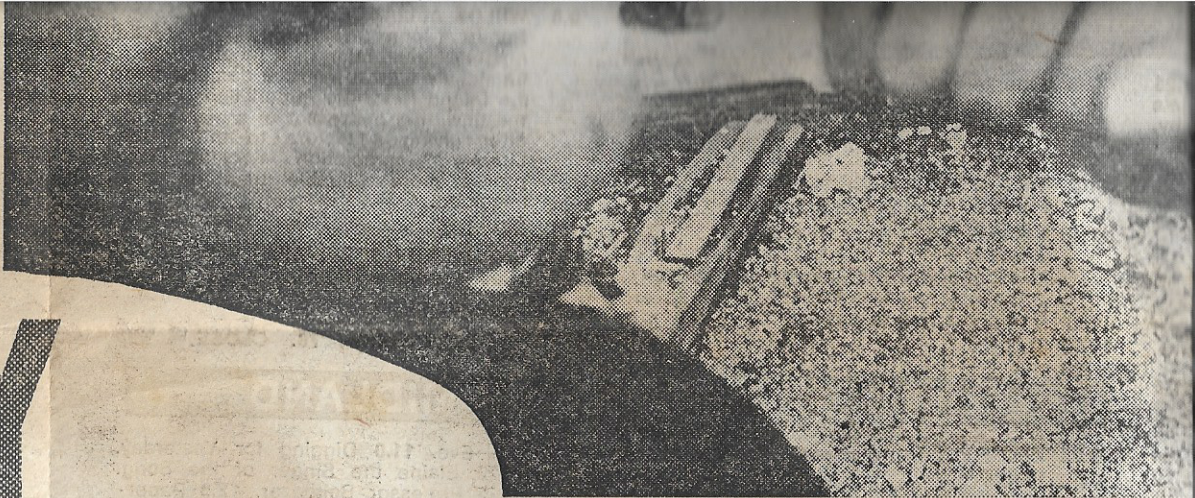
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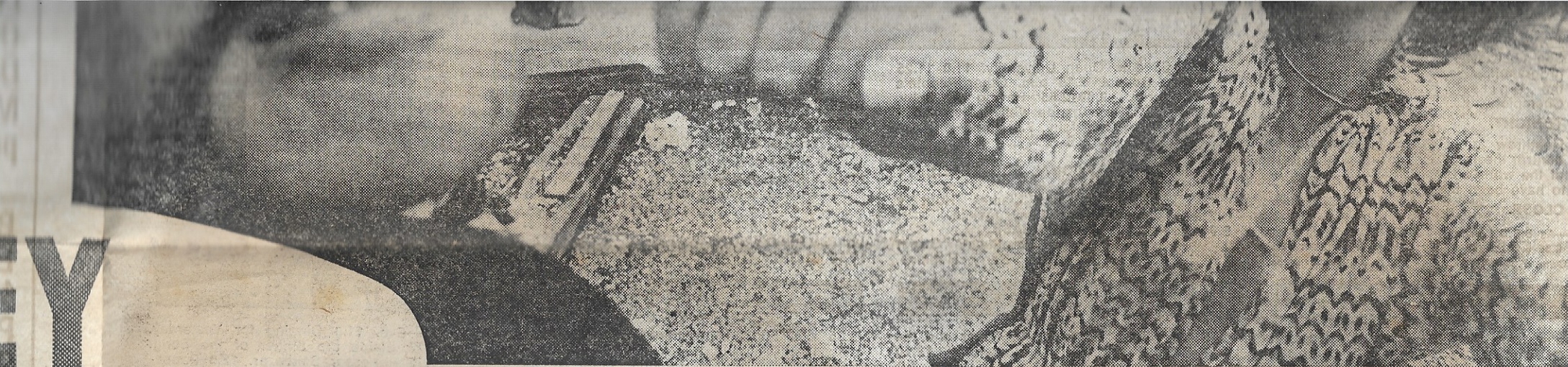
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# FRINGING OUT OF LOVE

**Fearless, hard-punching  
Avenger girl Purdy** The K.O. image:

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**W**ILL she, like so many, become a glittering bitch? "You mean the big star stuff—fix this, do that, and I can't and I shan't?" she said.

That's what I mean. "I don't think so because I've always genuinely liked people and got awfully upset if they didn't like me," she said, rounding her eyes like a troubled puppy.

"I honestly do try to think of the viewer in, say, Blackburn, who knows Purvey intimately on the box.

"If a Blackburn housewife meets the real me she expects a sort of

Purvey Lumley—not some snooty cow who tells her, 'I'm a very private person and I don't give autographs.'

"I know how people feel about stars. I never actually met Elvis—but, my God, I'll meet him in heaven and when I do I'll go down on my knees for a sweaty hankie.

"I can't stand sour-faced prunes who go around saying they're 'really very secret people' when they're all over the telly every night. I think they're rather pigs."

Ms Lumley is obviously bra-less. Her language is what she calls "flowery" and some would call fruity. How Lib is she?

**N**OT nearly so much as I seemed when I had Jamie," she said, swelling with pride at the mention of her joy. "It was bloody difficult having a baby, with no father around, ten years ago.

"When Jamie was born

nobody asked about my baby—not after they'd had a quick look down to see if I'd got the ring yet.

"A lot of people have said since that I was one of the first to yell, 'I'm having a baby, and to hell with you.'

"Actually, I'd been told I could never have a child and, when I did, they wrote me up in 'The Lancet.'

**W**HEN I started getting what I thought was fat—I was modelling then—I cut down to a tomato—a day.

"One day I passed out and the doctor told me I was six months pregnant. Far from thinking, 'great—to hell with everybody,' my first thought was 'oooooer!'

"Ten years ago girls had their babies adopted—thank God I couldn't go through with it. Six years ago, having a baby without marrying became accep-

table and, four years ago, it started to be fashionable."

Will Lib Lumley ever marry again? "These days, there aren't that many proposals around," she grinned.

"I sometimes dream of this fellow clattering up on a white horse, and me saying, 'oh gosh, sir, anything you say,' and him saying, 'just leave everything to me.'

"Then he'll shower me with everything he has in the world and not say what all men do these days—'half and half, love, it's only fair.'

"Of course, I'll give him back all his worldly wealth, and go on earning my own but the offer would be smashing."

**I**F not marriage, what else? "I couldn't tell you till I get the urge for love again," she told me frankly.

"Brigitte Bardot once said she'd never let her men 'overlap' but she likes

a quick turnover. My turnover is getting slower.

"Anyway, I shan't get the urge until men start looking tasty again—they don't at the moment—and I won't know that until I find myself nearly crashing into the car in front, trying to see the tasty man in the car behind."

**W**ILL she have another baby, if possible, either way? "Yes, if we were in love and we both wanted one," said the TV spy in whose arms men would gladly die even if she shot them first.

"In the end I think children are what matters most in the world.

"When you sit watching your own child, thrilled to bits with some marvellous, home-made model sports car with its engine hanging half out, you know what life's all about," she said.

"And you don't give a damn whether or not you get the film part with Robert Redford."



# television's First Lady of the Karate Chop



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