# EXPRESS WORLD on the sensitive heart beneath an Avenger girl's tough exterior

# What makes Purdey go pitter-patter?

AS the song says, it's "the way she walks, the way she talks" that makes Joanna Lumley stick out, and up, like a dandelion in a patch of dock leaves. I've known ler for years, in the vague sort of way you nod towards the parents of your children's friends, but it wasn't until I humped into her in the school playground that I came

impression of her. And what an impression. There was Lumley, a tanned There was Lumley, a tanned, tinted and towering baseball player, socks striped to the knees, peaked cap perched on the back of the head, running shoes that matched a numbered sweat-shirt, and ... weil, need I go on?

to have any particular

"Oh dear. Did you hate me terribly? It'; too, too bad," she remorsed a few days ago.

#### Sympathy

"No wonder some of the no wonder some of the mothers wouldn't talk to me. I could see them looking at me and thinking 'We know her sort' and then turning away."
They did not, of course, know her sort, and neither did

Inside every extrovert there is, it seems, a wait sobbing to get out and be liked. But if you're a one parent family who continually seems to find her name in gossip columns sympathy is not always offered to you in the abundance you might desire.

Everyone always thought I was so rich and so lucky. But when James was very small I was wretched half the time. I was just so lonely. Just James and me," she said.

"And when I was working in the theatra I was so desperately unhappy when he would turn to me and say 'Don't go out tonight mummy.' But I needed that £45 a week I was getting in the West End."

That was five years ago.
And now all of a sudden
Joanna Lumley is famous and
a bit better off and here am
I knocking on her door and
telling her how wonderful she
is as Purdey in "The New

I think of myself as jolly sensible, if people say I'm sexy-I'm dazzled?

By Ray Connolly

Avengers," legs and all, and hanging on to her every word . even the dirty ones; in fact, especially the dirty ones.

She is 30, and is the daughter of a retired major in the Gurkhas, who helped Orde Wingate win the war in

Burma.

She was born in Kashmir and then brought up in a succession of Far Eastern British Army bungalows before her parents eventually decided to post her to an Anglican convent near Hastings.

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As a girl sne was tall and spotty, so of course she went to Lucie Clayton's to learn to be a model. And for some reasons which she professes not to understand, since she thinks she looked exactly like every other girl in modelling at that time, she very quickly became very successful.

Then, when she was 21 and unmarried, James Lumley was born. And that had a very chastening effect upon her.

"I'd never cared at all about all the money I'd earned. But from then on I had to think about a career to support the two of us." she said.

She chose possibly the most precarious career in the world and took to the boards: But before anyone could say "darling, you were wonderful," she was, she says, "a catastrophic failure."

Her failures were in fact, legion. At the end of the

catastrophic failure."

Her failures were in fact, legion. At the end of the sixties she got her first big starring part in a film called "The Breaking of Bumbo." but unfortunately it was never released. Neither was her second film. "Tam Lin."

Her next film was shown. Unfortunately. It was called

"The Games People Play," cost barely anything to make (comparatively) and made a small fortune for its backers by playing at all those small cinemas which specialise in knicker doffing.

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"I thought it was going to be a bright little comedy..., but it turned into a dreary, foul, desperate, unfunny, dismal film. It was totally unerolic. I don't think that being naked is very funny at all instead of concentrating on the film, people are looking at your nipples and saying to themselves, 'Oh, look, she's got no chest.

"I remember the very first day I started shooting I had to get out of bed stark naked, and some poor wretched man who was equally starkers had to get out the other side.

### Sensible

"I knew then I should never have agreed to do it, but everybody kept coming up to me and saying 'Come on darlin'. It's nothin'. We've all got bodies, haven't we? But they hadn't all got my body."

I think I ventured to suggest at this point that I was sure that her body was no doubt a thing of great admiration, whereupon she cheered up and said something like golly or gosh, how exciting.—

"I always think of myself

"I always think of myself as being jolly sensible, the sort of person who can climb trees and be kind to a sick dog, and I'm dazzled to the point of going red if people think I'm sexy. It's a sort of naughty area that makes my heart go pitter-patter."

By the time "The New

Avengers" came along at the beginning of this year so abject seemed Joanna's career prospects that the agents she had then didn't even consider it worth her while going up for the part.

"But, when I heard that four-foot-three midgets who spoke only Polish were going up, I thought, 'Well, they could at least see me'."

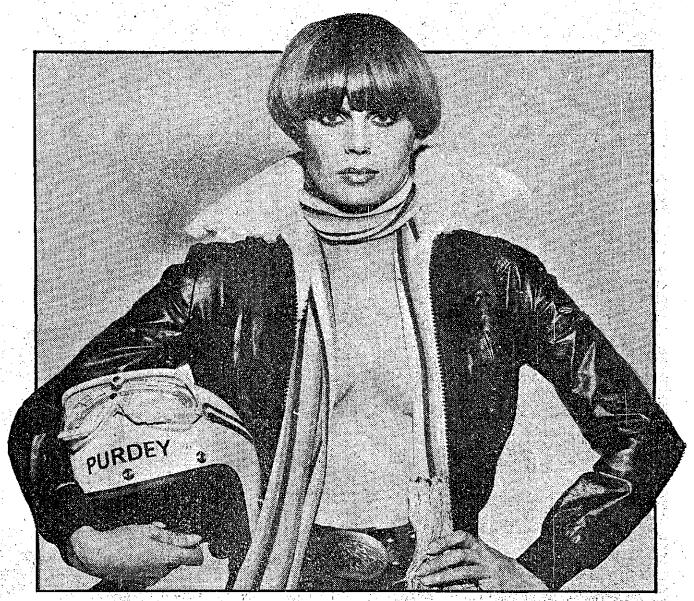
The result was the creation of Purdey, the weekly television fantasy woman who is not battery operated... nothing sion fantasy woman who is not battery operated . . nothing bionic could have legs that long that could kick so high. And if "The New Avengers" becomes an export item, she should before very long have repaid most of her overdraft. Not that life was totally miserable for her before "The New Avengers." In her midtwenties Joanna was married (and then very quickly unmarried), and she has been known to spoon with one or known to spoon with one or two exceedingly eligible lads. She lives in a large flat in Holland Park, which she shares with an actress friend.

#### Prefers

It's a nice, homely, roomy place, full of her own pictures of James, now aged nine and no longer at our local primary school but being groomed at a prep school at Harrow-on-the-Hill, and of her current boy friend, actor Michael Kitchen.

The best thing about Joanna Lumley seems to be that she's smashing company. I mean she works to keep you entertained when you talk to her. She tells you about the Book of Common Prayer which she keeps by her bed alongside Richmal Crompton's "Just William"; about her early collection of Dickens; about how she prefers stockings and about how her mouth drops open when she reads about the stars who have taken time open when she reads about stars who have taken time off to "find out where they're at"

"What can they mean?" she asks. "I've always known precisely where I'm at. I'm here... and I've always been here."



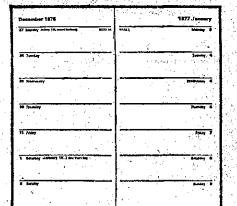
Joanna Lumley ... smashing company who works hard to keep you entertained

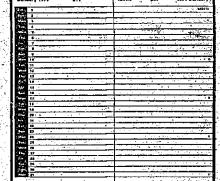
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## The secret of songbird Barbara's sudden chic

By Judith Simons

WHEN Barbara Dickson first made her nametwo years ago, singing Beatles' songs at the piano in the show "John, Paul, George, Ringo . . . and Bert"she was plump and frumpish with long straight hair and glasses. Today-girls of similar description take heart:— at the age of 29 Barbara has changed into a chic swinger. And she has surprised herself how.

"Everyone asks me how I lost so much weight. But in fact I haven't. It's illusory.

"What I did was change to

in my eyes.

"The basis of the change is that success has given me confidence to be more stylish. Until recently, through lack



Barbara Dickson...'74 frump, '76 style

contact lenses, get my hair cut short and permed, and take some expert advice on make-up, on how to shade my face and bring out the best in my eyes. of self-confidence, I told myself clothes didn't matter." She smoothed her well-cut woollen skirt, and confessed: "Natural thrift has semething

"Natural thrift has something to do with it, too. Even now I don't like to buy anything I can't justify."

The way things are going for her, Barbara, from Dunfermline, Scotland, can well justify a high budget for her wardrobe.

She is featured on the record "Evita." the new rock opera by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber, in the role of a 16-year-old mistress of Juan Peron displaced by the ambitious Eva.

She sings in the forthcoming cartoon of "Watership Down." And, following on her

She sings in the forthcoming cartoon of "Watership Down." And, following on her regular spot on the "Two Ronnies" TV series, she has now more television shows, will make her London Palladium debut next week supporting David Essex, and in January goes to the U.S. to make a record album.

For a girl singer to emerge into the star strata at Barbara's age is still a rare occurrence.

Barbara's age is sun a rate occurrence.

"I hope it indicates the end of that syndrome that you must be 17 with blue eyes, or no one wants to know," she said.

"I have also learned independence.

### Full-time

"Certainly, I can now func-tion artistically on my own. But I do have a male to take care of the business side— Bernard Theobald—who has managed me for the past five years.

years.

"No—he's not my boy friend," she told me quickly. My hoy friend is a musician.

"We don't live together. I live together.

"We don't live together. I live on my own in a two-room flat at the tatty end of Chelsea. And I have no thoughts on marriage."

She returned to the safer subject of her career—from the point, eight years ago, when she gave up her Ministry of Defence job to become a full-time folk singer. "I had been a Civil Servant for four years. I would have left sooner, but I was worried about the money

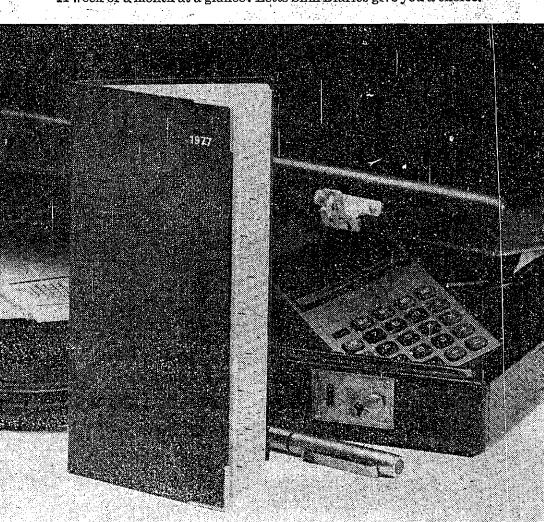
was worried about the money coming in.

"Then Willie Russell, whom I knew, happened to think of me when he was planning the Liverpool production of his Beatles play.

"But even during the run in London I still needed to be assured. I would not be left with nothing when the show ended. I was careful to keep up my contacts in the folk clubs."

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