

EXPRESS WOMAN 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 her for years, in the vague sort of way you nod towards the parents of your children's friends, but it wasn't until I bumped into her in the school playground that I came to have any particular impression of her.

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

By Ray Connolly

And what an impression. There was Lumley, a tanned, tinted and oiled 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... well, need I go on?

Sympathy
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.

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

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.

As a girl she 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."

"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 drama.

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

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

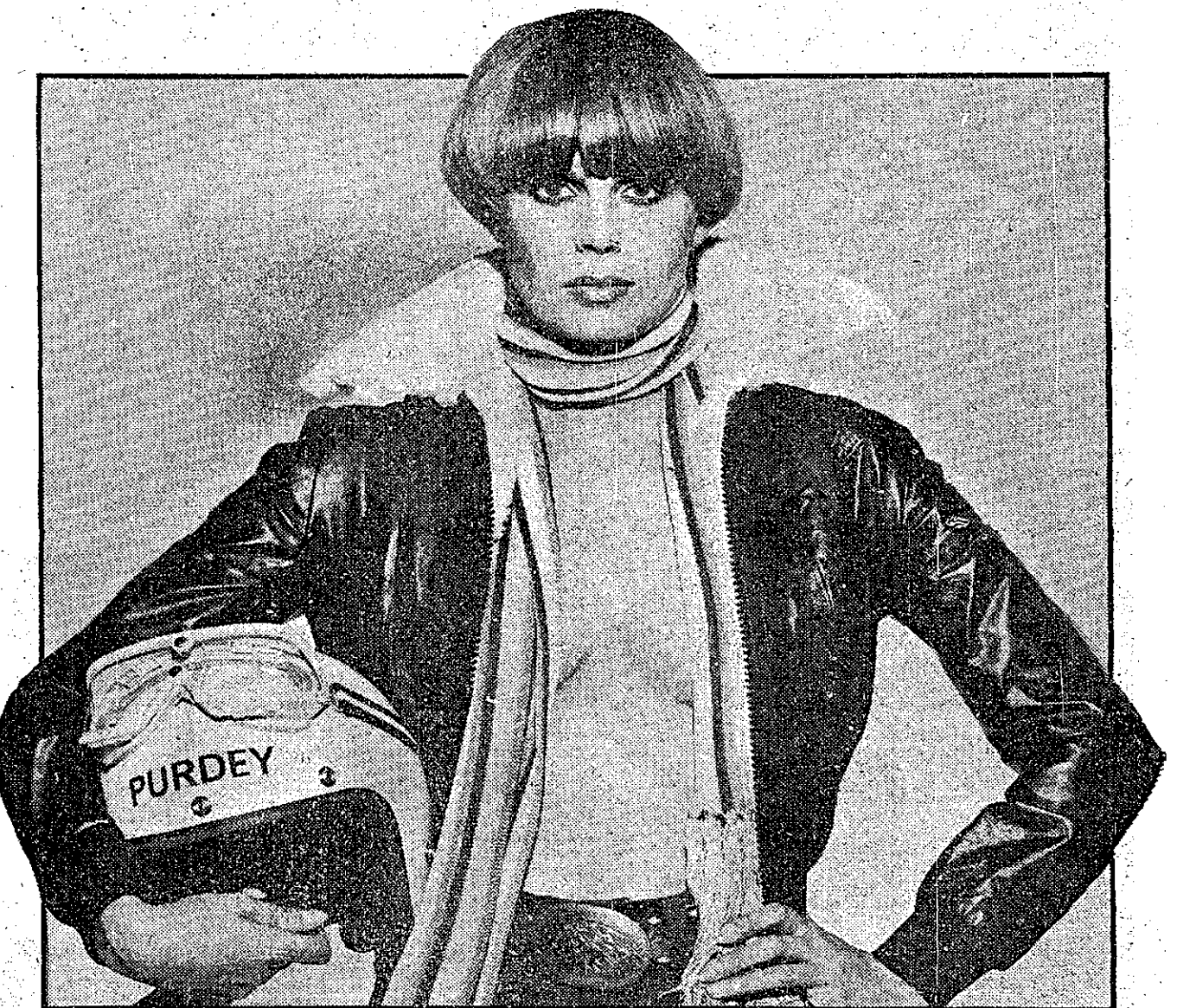
But, when I heard that four-foot-three midgets who spoke only Polish were going up, I thought, "Well, they could at least see me."

Prefers

It's a nice, 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 a smashing company who 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 suspenders to tights; and about how her mouth drops 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 here... and I've always been here."



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

The secret of songbird Barbara's sudden chic

By Judith Simons

WHEN Barbara Dickson first made her name—two 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.



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.

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

of self-confidence, I told myself clothes didn't matter."

She smoothed her well-cut woollen skirt, and confessed: "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 Dufferin, 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 regular spot on the "Two Ronnies" TV series—who 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 starry firmament at Barbara's age is still a rare 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.

Full-time

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

Not—he's not my boy friend," she told me quickly. My boy friend is a musician.

"We don't live together. I live on my own in a two-room flat at the 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.

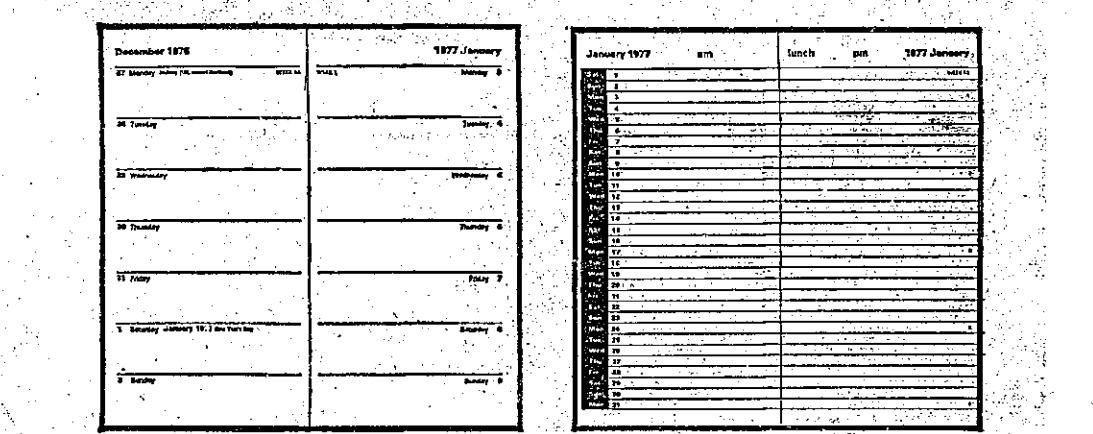
Then Willie Russell, whom I knew, happened to think of me when he was planning the Liverpool production of his Beatles play.

"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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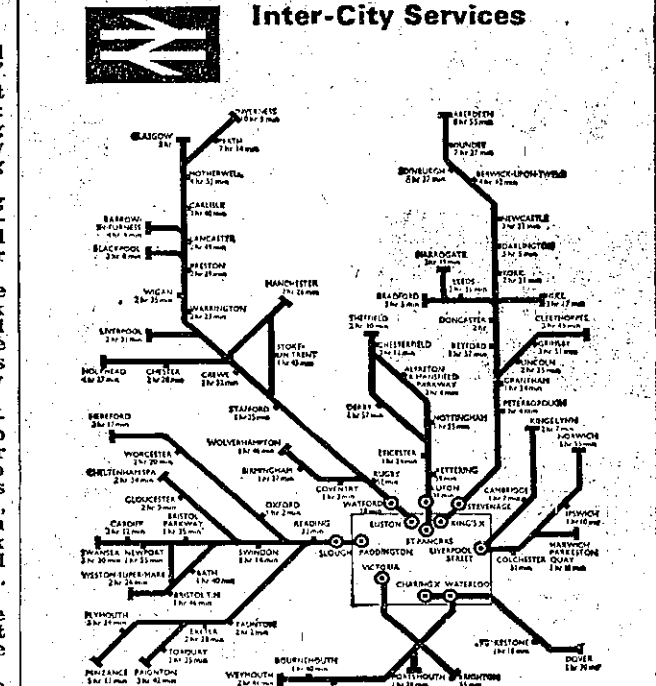
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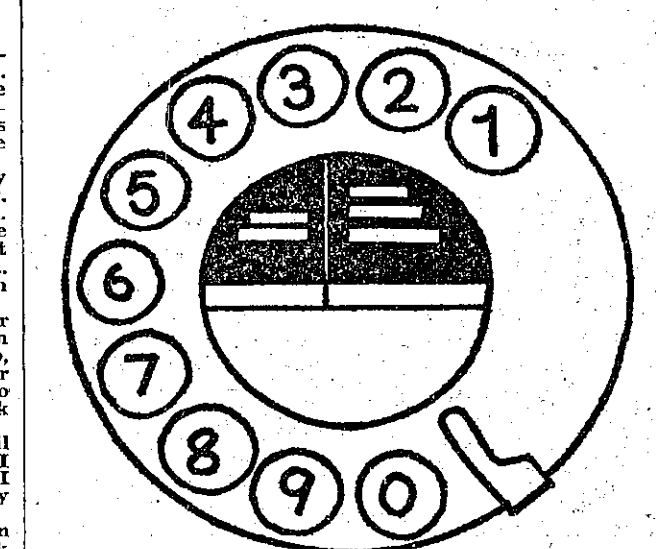
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