

# page 10 *more than just a woman's page*

## Life with the Lions!

**LOCAL ICE HOCKEY** side Lee Valley Lions have roared to the top of the national first division in their first season of competitive action — running rings around the more established sides.

But the Lions have a secret weapon, supporting three of the burly hockey players and contributing greatly to their success.

She is Jan Wurthman — a chatty 28-year-old Walthamstow girl who has played a large part in the Lions' phenomenal rise to the top.

Someone once said that behind every successful man is a woman — Jan Wurthman is the woman behind the men.

Jan is married to the Leyton ice hockey team's Canadian coach, Dave. They live in a house in Westcliff-on-Sea and when he is not involved with ice hockey Dave works for British Telecom.

They should live like an average couple — but Jan and Dave are not the only people living in their Essex home.

Also in residence are two other strapping North Americans by the names of Will Fish and Bill Watson. They are playing for the Lions this season after coming to this country from their home in Minnesota, USA and are staying with Jan and Dave.

Three ice hockey players would be enough for anyone — but Jan and Dave also have four children, all boys.

So, how does Jan cope with seven men around the house?:

"I somehow manage," she said. "As you can imagine it's a hectic lifestyle and occasionally I lose my cool with them all. I have my moments where I scream and shout and I explained that to Will and Bill when they came here. At least the men can understand my position; it's difficult for the children to."

Jan is a plucky character. She met Dave in Israel after leaving her Shernhall Street, Walthamstow, home to do a bit of travelling.

She originally went with a friend — but money was short and her companion turned back at Greece. Jan went on alone to Israel — with just £15 in her pocket.

### Reporter: Paul Newman

She met Dave, who was also travelling with friends, and a group of them went to live and work on a kibbutz — but it was hardly love at first sight.

"I can't say I liked him at first because I thought he was the classic all American hero," said Jan. "But he's such an easy person to get along with that I suppose love blossomed. It was quite a whirlwind romance, we were engaged two months later and married two months after that."

The couple lived in Canada for a while before settling in England. By this time unusual names Behn (8) had arrived and Toby (5) was Jan and Dave's second child.

But the couple may well have only had just the two children now, because their three-year-old twins Sam and Luke were born two months premature and almost died.

"I almost went into labour after just five months of pregnancy and I was rushed into hospital," said Jan. "Doctors told me it would be a miracle if they lived, but I was determined they'd survive."

Then followed a two month agonising spell at Whipps Cross Hospital when Jan could do nothing but wait.

When the twins were born they weighed just 2½ pounds and 3½ pounds.

"The year after that Sam and Luke were in and out of hospital and it was a difficult time," said Jan. "But things turned out alright. The people at the special care baby unit are wonderful."

Now this lady, who is glad she had a family at a young age because, "it's lovely to see them all grow up together," is used to her husband being out for most of the time.

She calculated that he recently spent 41 hours in one week on ice hockey — and that's supposed to be a hobby!

Very often, Dave, Will and Bill arrive home at a late hour after practise or a game, but Jan manages to put on a smile and give them their meals (which often are spoilt because they get home much later than she thought.)

Amazingly, she also finds time to work — as a waitress a couple of nights a week at a nearby restaurant.

"I need that outlet," said Jan, who admits she doesn't like sport a great deal.

"I also enjoy a good chat with my friends when we can talk about things other than ice hockey," she grinned.

So, if you go along to one of the Lions ice hockey games and admire the skills of Dave, Will and Bill — remember the woman behind the men — and all those late nights when Will Fish tucks away yet another piece of chicken and Bill Watson drinks yet another can of Budweiser!



● Throwing meat to the Lions — and potatoes! Jan Wurthman helps feed the insatiable appetite of Will Fish in front of the watching Bill Watson (with beer can) and husband Dave. (211).



keeper Vesa Pennanen manages