

TONIGHT'S VIEW

A new line in laughs

The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin (BBC1, 9.25). UNHAMPERED by the need to please manufacturers of washing powder and chocolate bars, the B.B.C. can at last try different ideas in comedy.

Pauline Yates and John Barron — promises much more than cheap cracks about mothers-in-law or lascivious laughs at middle-aged suits to which such a plot could degenerate.

Softly, Softly (BBC1 8.10) THIRTEEN years since he started upholding law and order in Z-Cars, Frank Windsor returns for another "season" tonight.

TELEVISION

Swinging tea party



LAST NIGHT'S "Survival Special" from Anglia TV was a study of the orang-utans of Sumatra—attractive, gingery, ape-like creatures who live in treetops. writes JAMES MURRAY.

But I found it just as fascinating to observe the instincts of two other fair-skinned, delightful creatures who also appeared in the film.

A widely scattered species in no danger of extinction, they are known by many colourful names like shellah, or bird. In the Western world

they are most commonly called women. The one encountered in the Sumatran rain forest must rate as prime specimens, marvellous women called Monica, Berner and Regina Frey, who journeyed from the comforts of their native Switzerland to rough it for the sake of the orang-utans.

Shrinking

It is not a nice place for young ladies from Switzerland, since the rain forest is alive with leeches and bugs and the humidity makes everything as slippery as grease so that even walking becomes an adventure.

That's why the smart orang-utans live in the treetops where it's healthy. Their world is shrinking, though, as timber merchants cold-bloodedly carve out their forest homes to make a few bob.

Monica and Regina were seen educating the Sumatrans into freeing orang-utans they kept as pets and then trying to teach the creatures how to live in their native environment.

In one extraordinary scene there was an afternoon tea party on a high treetop platform, with the girls dishing out bananas to an awing gang of creatures.

LAST NIGHT'S VIEW

How to climb trees and build nests for the night. The girls campaigned too to protect their child-like charges from human diseases like pneumonia, tuberculosis and polio. Not surprisingly, one of the babies mistook her human foster mother for the real thing and tried to suckle.

Hope

No surprise, either, that the girls took the view that the threats to the near-human orang-utans were akin to mass murder by mankind.

There's hope, though, that wickered man will be saved from the folly of his way while there are such noble ladies around.

ENTERTAINMENT

TELEVISION

BBC1

- 7.5-7.55 a.m. OPEN UNIVERSITY. 12.45 p.m. MIDDAY NEWS. WEATHER. 1.0 PEBBLE MILL. 1.45 BOD. 2.0 CLOSEDOWN. 4.20 PLAY SCHOOL. 4.45 SPEED BUGGY. 5.10 ASK ASPEL. 5.35 MAGIC ROUNDABOUT. 5.40 EVENING NEWS. WEATHER. 5.55 NATIONWIDE. 6.45 FILM: Carry On Up The Khyber (1969). Dirty deeds in India during the seventeenth century. The central theme concerns the question of what the soldiers of the Third Foot and Mouth Regiment wear under their kilts. With Sid James, Kenneth Williams and Joan Sims, the result is very funny.—lan Christie. 8.10 SOFTLY, SOFTLY: TASK FORCE. Not With A Bang... (See Tonight's View.) 9.0 NEWS. WEATHER. 9.25 THE FALL AND RISE OF REGINALD PERRIN: (See Tonight's View.) 9.55 INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL: England v. Republic of Ireland. 10.50 BERT D'ANGELO: A Noise In The Street. The American cop who doesn't shave his head, doesn't wear a dirty mac, hasn't got a wise-cracking Jewish colleague, and doesn't work in Hawaii. Otherwise, situation normal. 11.40-11.42 WEATHER. REGIONAL NEWS.

BBC2

- 6.40-7.55 a.m. OPEN UNIVERSITY. 9.5 NAI ZINDAGI NAYA JEEVAN. 9.30 TRADES UNION CONGRESS. 11.0 PLAY SCHOOL. 11.25-12.45 p.m. T.U.C. 2.15-3.30 T.U.C. 5.25 OPEN UNIVERSITY. 7.5 DRESSMAKER: Part 6. 7.30 NEWS ON 2. WEATHER. 7.40 GARDENERS' WORLD: You may have thought that after the drought there wouldn't be much to talk about. Wrong—in this last programme for 1976 Peter Seabrook talks about pot plants for winter and preparing the garden for next year.

ITV

- 9.45 a.m. SALLY AND JAKE (repeat). 10.0 BONE (repeat). 10.50 CARTOON TIME. 11.0 TRAVELS UNION CONGRESS. 12.0 THE ADVENTURES OF RUPERT BEAR (repeat). 12.10 p.m. PIPKINS. 12.30 MR. AND MRS. 1.0 FIRST REPORT. 1.20 LUNCHTIME TODAY. 1.30 AND MOTHER MAKES FIVE (repeat). 2.0 GOOD AFTERNOON. 2.25 MID-WEEK RACING FROM DONCASTER. 3.50 EMMERDALE FARM (repeat). 4.20 RUNAROUND. 4.45 ROGUE'S ROCK. 5.15 CARTOON TIME. 5.30 SPORTSCENE. 5.45 NEWS. 6.0 TODAY. 6.35 CROSSROADS. 7.0 DON'T ASK ME: People who appreciate the self-conscious eccentricity of Magnus Pike and the overpowering enthusiasm of David Clemens, undoubtedly will ask the panel various questions and enjoy the answers. 7.30 CORONATION STREET. 8.0 WEDNESDAY STAR MOVIE: Deadfall (1969). Michael Caine plays a jewel thief who joins up with married couple Eric Portman and Giovanna Ralli to pull off a big caper. Very contrived, with the robbery intercut with shots of a symphony concert. The music's all right.—lan Christie. NEWS AT TEN. 10.30 THE WEDNESDAY SPECIAL: (See Tonight's View.) 11.30 WORLD SNOOKER: England v. The Rest of the World. 12.0 WHAT THE PAPERS SAY. CLOSE.

- 8.10 SIR MORTIMER: Digging Up People: The astonishingly full, varied, and distinguished life of archaeologist, soldier and TV personality Sir Mortimer Wheeler who died this summer aged 85. 9.0 ARENA. 9.40 CLASSIC TV DRAMA: Repeat of the 1968 showing of Peter Nichols's play "The Gorge," in which a family take the paraphernalia of suburban life on a picnic at the Cheddar Gorge, much to the disgust of their sixth-former son. 11.0 BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE: Last of the six-part series looks at the loveliness of a Thailand ballet dancer. 11.5 NEWSNIGHT. WEATHER. 11.20-11.25 CLOSEDOWN.

TAKE a submarine, the Old Bailey and a seventeenth century street. Then create an adventure including all three. That kind of bizarre challenge back in the "B" movie days of the 'fifties was the adrenalin that triggered the story machine known as Brian Clemens.

"The plots were dictated by the scenery we could make use of after the big film makers were finished with them," he says. "It really taxed the imagination, but it created a marvellous pressure. Any fool can do a good job given £10 million and a hired army to stage the Battle of Waterloo. But it takes real ingenuity to do it with two soldiers."

Mr. Clemens quickly graduated as a television fantasist spreading thrills and mayhem across the crooked pastures of television peopled by Danger Man, The Persuaders, The Protectors, The Baron and the homicidal nuts of "Thriller."

Mr. Fantastic plots a gleeful fate for the Avengers

By James Murray

Ideas have been popping out of the Clemens imagination since he discovered he was a compulsive writer at the age of five and produced his first slim volume (one copy) called "Brooky and the Bad Adder," the story of a badger and a snake.

On the strength of his first half-hour B.B.C. television play in 1956 he was taken into the "B" movie industry—we made the cheapest and the worst. But now he fondly recalls those early days. "It took me a long time to get rid of the guilt that someone was actually paying me for doing something I wanted to do anyway," he says. "I was getting £1,000 a year, big money in those days."

It must be more like £1,000 a script nowadays and he's co-producer of The Avengers too. "I don't think I'm a marvellous writer," he says. "But I'm a good story teller. The trick with this



Brian Clemens (with a touch of the Steeds) ... "when in doubt, make your character crazy"

fantasy writing is never to alienate the audience by making it too exotic. In my mind the one thing that spells disaster is when Mum reaches forward to the switch-off button after watching for three minutes and says: "That's just too silly!"

Come October Mr. Clemens and the French connection confidently expect Britain's mums, dads and kids to press the on button that turns their £4 million into a tidy international profit.

Mastery—in this minor play

WRITTEN when the great Chekhov was still in his twenties, "Ivanov" is an imperfect play, chiefly notable last night for a cluster of masterful performance.

The concentration of Chekhov's power and genius was to come later with plays like "The Seagull," "Three Sisters" and "The Cherry Orchard."

This early work is like a great, clumsy, preparatory sketch for all of them. The Chekhovian themes of personal frustration, the obsession with money and failure and status, are all here.

John Wood, with his accustomed intensity and flair, plays the role that an impoverished landowner possessed by sudden and nameless guilt and mid-life depression.

Bizarre

Around him and his doomed marriage to a gentle, dying Jewish girl (Estelle Kohler), teems a gallery of Russian characters, grand and grotesque alike and bizarre. The surreal, pre-Revolutionary Russia.

David Jones's production seemed off-swing and staid, sometimes perfunctorily approaching the dimension of farce. But maybe there is no other way to whip comedy into this flawed drama. It remains a fragmented but spirited evening, with performance of soul, sweep and stature from Mr. Wood, Miss Kohler, Bob Hoskins, Mia Farrow and a goodly cluster of Royal Shakespeare Company stalwarts.

Ticking off clockwork Twyla...

TWILA THARP DANCERS: Edinburgh Festival WAS it wishful thinking, or did I actually see some smiles unfreeze the faces of Twyla Tharp's Dancers in the new ballet she created for their Festival season at Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum Theatre? writes NOEL GOODWIN.

If so, it marks quite a development in a style of seemingly flippant yet inherently always blank-faced dancing which Twyla has made the mope-headed Twyla something of a cult figure in American dance.

I was sorry that she did not give herself a role in her new dance. Twyla Tharp, which takes seven country and western-style numbers performed on tape as the basis of a dance suite, is a piece of light-hearted fun, with one man and three girls among whom Shelley Washington made a vivid impression.

She supplied that touch of personality missing from the others in the choreography which makes them look so often like clockwork figures, in the "Eight Jelly Rolls" to the superb 1920's jazz of Jelly Roll Morton.

Also revealed from their last British visit is "The Fuzuc," where the choreography in the dancers' boots set up a dreary punctuation to greater movement.

Table with columns: ANGLIA, MIDLAND, SOUTHERN, WESTWARD. Lists TV programmes for various regions.

Table with columns: WALES, HTV, GRANADA, YORKSHIRE, CHANNEL. Lists TV programmes for various regions.

Table with columns: RADIO. Lists radio programmes for various stations.

Advertisement for British Gas. Text: "When winter comes, you'll be glad you had your gas central heating checked in summer." Includes an illustration of a gas fitter and a coupon for requesting a service call.