

By Ernest Thomson
He made friends with a dragon

MAKING friends with a fighting dragon and getting him to eat out of one's hand is something that comes easily to filming naturalist Heinz Sielmann. He proves it in his next *Discovery* film in BBC television on Friday. He was touring the Galapagos Islands, studying the iguanas or "dragons" which live on the almost inaccessible lava rocks. Watch him tempt one with some titbits in his palm. During his stay, Sielmann filmed dragon fights in which there is a lot of scuffling around, but little damage. Appropriately, he calls his film, *Tournament of Dragons*.

The Bard as a "cliff-hanger"

LAST Sunday afternoon BBC television was due to begin weekly repeats of *The Age of Kings*. This group of eight Shakespeare plays form a 15-part serial.

The series has been an immense success on American TV. America's *Newsweek Magazine* referred to two stations which discovered that "the Bard can be run as a cliff-hanger."

OUT WITH THE AIR CADETS

JOHN MITCHELL, the young explorer in Associated-Rediffusion's *In Search of Adventure*, will team up on Friday with an air cadet as the TV cameras visit the Air Training Corps at Maidenhead. Through the eyes of John and his friend we can watch the ATC instructional course from start to finish.

ZIZI DRIVES UP IN THE SUPERCAR

Meet Zizi, the little girl puppet you will soon be seeing for the first time in ITV's *Supercar* on Sundays. Zizi, who is French, has just been made by modelling expert John Blundell at a cost of nearly £300.

LIKE Mike Mercury, Professor Popkess, and the other characters, Zizi has lips that move electrically in time with the words. She sings, too, to the voice of Sylvia Anderson, who told me that Zizi is coming into the picture to give the stories a greater interest for girls.

"Of course, ever so many girls are already thrilled by *Supercar*," she said. "Mike Mercury gets letters from girls of all ages, but Zizi will certainly add to the feminine appeal!"

"Zizi enters the story as a stow-away on a plane. From France



she travels to Nevada, and it's a terrific surprise for Professor Popkess in the *Supercar* laboratory when he opens what he thinks is a crate of French wine and out jumps Zizi. Soon she is up to her eyes in adventures."

Miss Anderson told me the *Supercar* fan club now has more

than 26,000 members. One of Mike Mercury's youngest fans is six-year-old Stephen Dowthwaite, who lives in London's West End. The other day a parcel arrived at the *Supercar* Film Studios at Slough, Buckinghamshire. In it was a splendid model which Stephen had made of a *Supercar* in cardboard.

Reg Hill, *Supercar*'s designer, was so pleased that he sent the young constructor one of the new 12-inch-long plastic *Supercar* models now in the shops.

SPORTSVIEW CHOICE

WHO is BBC television's Junior Sportsview Personality of the Year? We shall know on Friday when *Sportsview* cameras roam the National Schoolboy's Own Exhibition at Olympia, London, for a tour which ends up with the presentation of the award.

Viewers will also see some of Britain's leading women gymnasts, a physical training display by men of the Services and a boxing demonstration by amateur heavyweight champion Billy Walker.

A lovely face—just as a change

"ONE of the most beautiful faces in the whole of the animal kingdom." That is what Dr. Desmond Morris says of the Fennec Fox of North Africa, and he will show close-ups of this little creature at the end of this Wednesday's *Zoo Time* on ITV to make up for the ugly scorpions and lizards seen in the London Zoo Reptile House.

Why The Brook Brothers Left Home



WINCHESTER, the ancient capital of England, is not a very lively town as to Show business. Few people want it to be.

So two of its bright teenagers Ricky and Geoff Brook realised that the chance of finding show-business fame in their home town was nil—and they left.

Ricky and Geoff Brook are now known throughout the country for their polished duo-singing and lively performances on stage. But it is through their records that the Brook Brothers (their real name and they really are brothers) have made a reputation.

"We were always keen to get on the stage as a career," Ricky,

aged 19, says. "Every day after school we used to practise singing and playing the guitars."

After appearing as semi-professionals their talents brought them a recording contract and sent them touring the country.

"It was not until our fourth recording—called *Warpaint*—that we knew we had made the grade."

The song got in the hit parade as much on its catchy lyric as its tune, which is quite something in an age when song-writers say nobody ever listens to the words.

Ricky and Geoff's latest record is called *He's Old Enough To Know Better* and it's on Pye 7N. 15409 (Single 6s. 9d.).

OTHER NEW DISCS

Doug Sheldon began his working life as a "barker" in a fairground. About a year ago someone heard him singing and persuaded him to make a record and now he has made *Your Ma Said You Cried In Your Sleep Last Night* (Decca. F.11416. Single 6s. 9d.).

It's the habit of traditional jazz and rock groups to array themselves in all sorts of uniforms these days. Nero and the Gladiators, dressed in Roman togas and armour, take some beating. So does their treatment of *Czardas* (Decca. F.11413. Single 6s. 9d.).

Patrick Moore takes a look at the . . .

FIVE STARS OF CASSIOPEIA

It may be appropriate if I begin my first article in the *New Year* by taking a look at some of the things in store in the next twelve months.

It is dangerous to make forecasts about developments in the space research programme. Unmanned vehicles to the Moon, flights around the Moon, artificial satellites carrying a whole crew instead of a single man, and probe rockets to Venus and Mars are all quite possible, and some of them should be achieved within the next twelve months. However, we can be much more certain about the "natural phenomena."

IN 1962 there are no eclipses of the Sun visible from Britain. Neither are there any proper eclipses of the Moon.

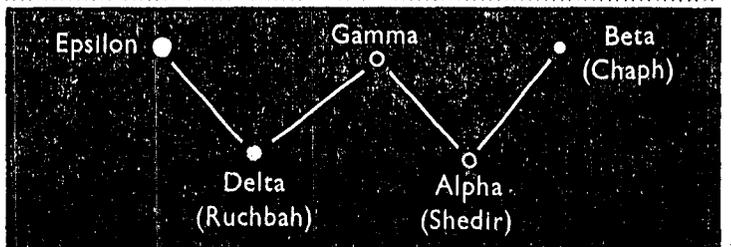
One comet, discovered in 1961, is drawing closer to us, and may become visible without a telescope in the late summer, but it is not likely to be spectacular. The August meteor shower will not be seen at its best, as moonlight will interfere with it.

Of the planets, Venus will be an evening star for most of the year, and will reach its greatest brilliancy on 8th October, when it will be a dazzling object in the west after sunset. Mercury is always hard to see without a telescope, but should become visible for a few evenings around 13th May. Jupiter and Saturn will be best observed in the summer, though both will still be rather

low down. Mars will have become brilliant by the end of December, 1962.

At the moment there are no planets favourably visible in the evening skies, so let us turn instead to a constellation which many people can recognise. This is Cassiopeia, whose five chief stars make up the shape of a rough W. On January evenings Cassiopeia is almost straight overhead, and cannot possibly be missed, particularly as the Milky Way runs through it.

Of the five stars in the W of Cassiopeia, two are particularly interesting, as they are what are known as "variables." One of these is Shedir (Alpha Cassiopeiae), which is about 200 times as luminous as the Sun. It is decidedly orange, which means that its surface is cooler than the Sun's. Shedir changes irregularly



between magnitude 2.1 and 2.7, which is why it is called a "variable." It is usually a little fainter than the Pole Star.

The other "variable" is Gamma Cassiopeiae, the middle star of the W. Generally it is rather fainter than Shedir, but now and then it has "bursts," becoming much brighter than the Pole Star for a time. The last notable "burst" occurred in 1936, but another may take place at any moment.

Amateur observers can make themselves useful by watching these and other irregular variable stars. The method is to compare the variable with a steady star of known brightness. For instance, Chaph in Cassiopeia is of

magnitude 2.4, and Ruchbah 2.8. Suppose we find that the variable Gamma is about midway in brightness between Chaph and Ruchbah? Its magnitude must then be half-way between 2.4 and 2.8—that is to say, 2.6, which was the magnitude of Gamma when I looked at it just before sitting down to write this article.

Members of the Junior Astronomical Society have formed a variable-star section to carry out this work, and the results are being found most useful. It is a line of research open to everyone, as no instruments are needed. All you want is a star atlas, a list of comparison stars, and plenty of patience and enthusiasm.