

London Town

... a guide to
high class London



The Queen Forthcoming engagements

After her return to Buckingham Palace from Sandringham at the end of January, the Queen will stay in London for the whole of February.

But she has a number of public engagements during the month.

On 15 February the Queen and Prince Philip will attend a reception given by the Confederation of British Industry to meet 25 young executives. Four days later she will see The Mikardo at London's Saville Theatre. The next day she will visit the Royal College of Music.

On 22 February she will attend a reception given by the General Council of the Bar at the Inner Temple, and on 28 February the Queen will open the Richard Dimpleby Research Laboratory at St Thomas's Hospital.

In March she will open a new Salvation Army hostel in White-chapel.

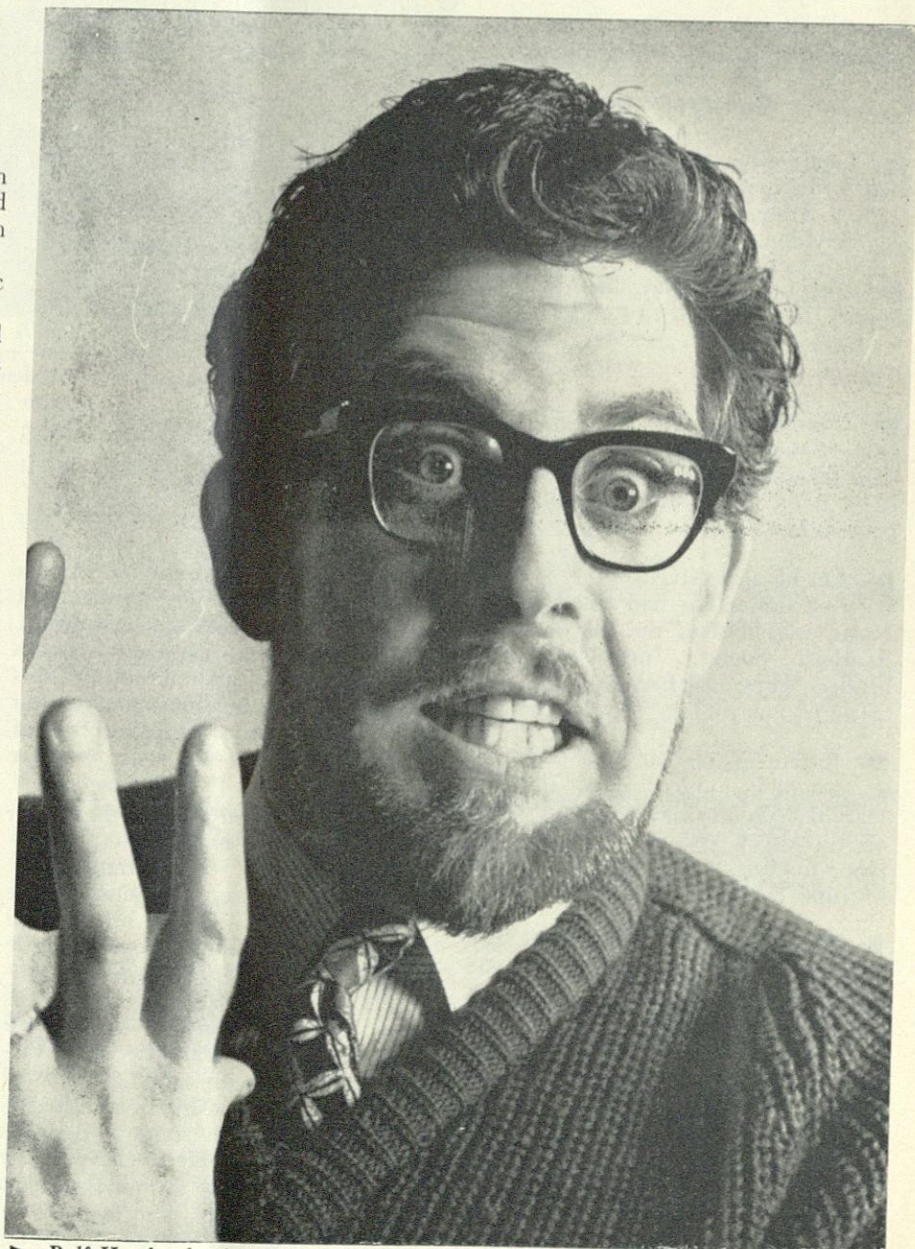
Engagements in April include visiting the Ministry of Social Security's computer centre at Reading, and attending a banquet at London's Lancaster House as part of the celebrations of the RAF's 50th anniversary. In June she visits Abingdon, Berkshire, in connection with the anniversary.

Later in the year visits are scheduled for Bristol, Oxford, Lancashire and Cheshire, and to Norwich, in East Anglia.

Saleroom & Antiques

Something brewing in the teapot line

Some people collect clocks. Multi-millionaire banker J Pierpont-Morgan spent half a life-time scouring the world for clocks and assembled a magnificent collection, now at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. Other people collect teapots. It the latter which brings us to 76-year-old Tom Williams who is shortly off to the Far East. His objective is i-Hsing, 80 miles inland from



► Rolf Harris, the Australian who is the despair of the scriptwriters, was at one time mainly a children's entertainer. But he has now developed into a versatile and popular star. For an exclusive interview with Rolf Harris see page 17.

Shanghai where he claims some of the best teapots were made.

Teapots financed the trip for he brought his collection to the Puttick and Simpson saleroom last week and realised £1,553. Not exactly encouraging prices, but nevertheless Mr Williams is still determined on his trip to China.

One of the highest prices paid for a teapot was £3,800 in 1966 for a Chelsea teapot from the collection of

the late Rev C J Sharpe. In 1941 it fetched £17. Maybe there is something brewing up in the teapot line.

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English and American woven silk pictures are coming to the market again. Knight, Frank and Rutley announce this week they are holding a sale. Prices of these woven souvenirs have been going up and up in the past year or so, and the sale of Steven-

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► The informality and friendliness of the Rolf Harris Show is undoubtedly the main reason for its success. A relaxed atmosphere, created by Rolf and his team of young dancers, has given the show top audience ratings in Britain and Australia.

Rolf Harris—one of Australia's biggest exports

Rolf Harris stood up, hurried over to the large pieces of orange paper spread-eagled on the wall, and carefully added more paint to his latest work.

He returned to his seat and, for a full 30 seconds, continued talking fondly of his native Australia. Then, muttering something about 'it's still not right', he was back at the picture with paint brush in hand.

Back to the chair. 'As I was saying, when I came to England in 1952 I came to study art and to do some entertaining. I thought it would take about six weeks to be discovered and be a big success.'

It was, in fact, 14 years later—in 1966—that Rolf got his 'big break' when he secured a BBC television series.

'I was terrified, especially, as my show followed Val Doonican's series. He was getting audiences of 14m people.'

Rolf's eye began wandering over his painting again (he paints one picture in each television show) and picked out some more faults.

'The biggest worry with this is that during the show I can't stand back and look at it. So I have to know exactly how to do it beforehand. And the timing has to be right.'

For most of the time since he left Western Australia Rolf had been, 'very definitely' a children's entertainer. He made numerous television appearances on children's shows — using his talent for art — and in cabaret. He also entertained at the Down Under Club.

Now his television shows are screened in Australia and have top audience ratings—above those of the Dean Martin show which is extremely popular.

He visits Australia as often as commitments will allow. 'I don't have all that much contact with Australians in England,' he confessed, 'which is why I like to get back.'

But he finds that Australians can be very critical. 'If they think anyone has developed a big star complex they soon let him know. They are very level people.'

Rolf has now become, as one of his friends put it, one of Australia's biggest entertainment exports to Britain.

Recently he hasn't found much time to devote to painting, although it hasn't always been so. In 1956 he had some paintings exhibited at the Royal Academy summer show.

The Saturday television shows have become popular, according to critics, because of their informality and friendliness. But above all, because of Rolf Harris' personality.

He obviously enjoys himself, and viewers seem to like his tendency of forgetting words or names. 'I am the despair of the scriptwriter,' he says.

But this can lead to awkward situations, especially as the show is screened 'live' in England.

'On one show we had Shani Wallis as the guest star, and I was going to do a song with an accordion before she came on. But I didn't know that the preceding act had run four minutes over time.'

'I picked up the accordion and was introducing the song when I got a "throat-cut" sign—meaning that the song had been cut. But the scenery for Shani hadn't been floated into posi-



tion and she was still in her dressing room—she wasn't even dressed.

'I had to talk for about five minutes, introducing her while the scenery was lowered and she was dragged on stage. At last I said, "And here she is. . . ." And I forgot her name.'

'I'd been saying the name all day and I couldn't remember it. I just stood there with my mouth open. Fortunately the producer faded me out and switched cameras to Shani. And luckily Shani couldn't hear what I wasn't saying. I'll never forget that moment.'

How did Rolf get his first series. 'Well, I was doing cabaret at the Talk of the Town when the BBC saw me. They had a vacancy for a 40 minute special about three days later because the original star, Vikki Carr, was ill. My act was about an hour long and they thought I could fill the gap. So they offered it to me and the series followed.'

Rolf, who lives with his English wife and young daughter at Sydenham, South London, has developed from the children's entertainer into a highly professional, and very popular, entertainer.

He sings, tells jokes, paints, plays the accordion, and writes comedy songs. And there is an added attraction in his Australian accent.