



a tailor-made option, a hometown boy who knew what a television camera looked like.

The money was awful, Harris recalled from London, where his delayed career as a serious artist is blooming spectacularly, but he jumped at the chance to come back to Perth for the excitement and drama of the birth of a TV station. The result was a program called *Relax with Rolf*. He stayed for a year before being put under contract by Dulux Paints to paint and sing his way around the country.

At TVW there was a lot of learning to be done, particularly by performers who had worked only on the stage — and in 1950s Australia there was nowhere else they could have worked.

“They were used to having a proscenium arch,” he

laughs, with the actors facing the audience and confined to a particular area of the stage. They were used, too, to directions about entering and exiting “stage left”.

“They didn’t understand the television camera, and the fact that it could follow them wherever they went,” he said, and that it could follow every expression, every gesture they made.

Unsurprisingly, that took some time to get used to and his experience in London, limited though it was, was invaluable when for so many of his co-workers television was a mystery they were only beginning to unravel.

Most of his work with TVW was as presenter of *Children’s Channel 7*, which was based firmly on the British *Blue Peter* series. Penny Fawcner, who arrived as Penny Hoes from

the UK just as the station was opening and was immediately employed on the basis of her work as a production assistant with the BBC, remembered: “It was a mixed format of entertainment and more instructive items,” she said. “I can remember visits to the zoo, the Mint, a brickworks and various other locations,

“We had lots of different contributors, including (wildlife experts) Harry Butler and Len McKenna, Pat Thomas on pets and Colm O’Doherty, who was a storyteller.

“Rolf was entirely responsible for the program content and Beverley Gledhill was in charge of the program direction — I was script assistant and general dogsbody, and absolutely loved it.”

She stayed at TVW for three years, in a variety of production roles, before returning to the UK where she met and married her husband. ➤

Far left: Rolf Harris as he is best remembered — creating magic with a house paintbrush.

Left: Trying to Tie Me Kangaroo Down, Sport.

Centre: Taking it easy.

Above: At work — in the pool.