

# Dennis Waterman

Titles: 10      Sources: 4      Stills: 3

Born: Clapham, London; February 24<sup>th</sup> 1948



*Preparing to walk the prank in "Just William"*  
Source: *Golden Age of Children's Television*

Halliwel's Filmgoer's Companion entry:

"British juvenile of the sixties."

**Halliwell's Television Companion** entry:

"Amiable British actor and true product of the television age: in **"MEMBER OF THE WEDDING"** (1959) and **"ALL SUMMER LONG"** (1960) as a juvenile, as well as William in the original TV version of **"Just William"**; these days best known for **"The Sweeney"** and **"Minder"**. Also writes and sings, and in 1982 part-financed, as well as starred in the TV movie **"WORLD CUP: A CAPTAIN'S TALE"**."

**The Moving Picture Boy** entry:

"Sandy-haired Dennis, who attended the Corona School from the age of eleven, was the younger brother of the European welterweight boxing champion Peter Waterman, and shared some of his pugnaciousness. Around 1960 he had the lead on an "alternative" LP of Bart's

"Oliver!", played in Shakespeare at Stratford-on-Avon and in "The Music Man" on the London stage, and became TV's first incarnator of Richmal Crompton's **William**.

In 1962 Dennis landed a five-year contract with Desilu for a TV series called **"Fair Exchange"**, about a cockney family in New York. His biggest film role was for the Children's Film Foundation in **"GO KART GO!"**

Dennis did little filming in his mid-teens. Then he returned with a vengeance. Subsequent films included **"UP THE JUNCTION"** (67), **"THE SMASHING BIRD I USED TO KNOW"** (69), **"MY LOVER, MY SON"** (69), **"WEDDING NIGHT"** (69), **"THE SCARS OF DRACULA"** (70), **"MAN IN THE WILDERNESS"** (US 71), **"FRIGHT"** (71),



*Publicity still, circa 1960*

*Source: The Moving Picture Boy*

"THE BELSTONE FOX" (73), "SWEENEY!" (76) and "SWEENEY 2" (78).

These last two were derived from the long-running TV cop series "**The Sweeney**", in which he had an important part; a lead in

another similar series, "**Minder**", followed and lasted even longer. Since then Waterman has developed into a popular leading man, mainly on stage and television, but without any particular charm or lightness of touch."

Excerpt from **Radio Times** profile/interview (95):

"...He was born in Clapham, the last of nine children of a ticket collector - "I was everyone's baby, very spoilt" - and when he failed the eleven-plus went to the Corona stage school at the suggestion of a sister who ran an amateur dramatic group. "I did a season at Stratford when I was 12, earned enough for my school fees and have paid for everything myself ever since. We lived on a council estate and I was called a poof a couple of times because I learned dancing. So we had a fight, and that was that. I missed out on education, which I regret, but if I heard someone talking about my life I'd think - Cor, fantastic! - then I realise it's me. It's cool. The biggest problem with child actors is growing up. Most fall out of the game and many actors come into it for medical treatment - because they have stammers or personality disorders."

At 14, chaperoned by his mother, he went to Hollywood for a television series, "**Fair Exchange**". "I was terribly well-treated because they'd never met a child actor whose mum didn't keep asking - Why isn't he in shot? - All she did was knit sweaters for the crew. She wasn't a stage mum, and I wasn't a stage child. I just turned up, did my work, and went home..."

**Radio Times** retrospective note:

"1962: Dennis Waterman had already completed a season with the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford and a film, "**NIGHT TRAIN TO INVERNESS**", before landing the lead role as **William** at the age of 14 for the BBC. But he was all grown up by the time he went on to play D.S. Carter in "**The Sweeney**" and Terry McCann in "**Minder**". "

[no entry in "The Motion Picture Almanac 1994" or "Television and Video Almanac 1994"]

## FILMOGRAPHY

| Year | Age | Title                                                                                                                                               | Role                                          |
|------|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 59   | 11  | NIGHT TRAIN FOR INVERNESS<br><i>with John Moulder-Brown</i>                                                                                         |                                               |
| 59   |     | MEMBER OF THE WEDDING                                                                                                                               | UK TV                                         |
| 60   | 12  | ALL SUMMER LONG                                                                                                                                     | UK TV                                         |
| 60   |     | SNOWBALL                                                                                                                                            |                                               |
| 60   |     | ALI AND THE CAMEL<br><i>with Mohamed Rifai</i>                                                                                                      | voice only                                    |
| 61   | 13  | THE PIRATES OF BLOOD RIVER<br><i>with Peter Pike</i>                                                                                                |                                               |
| 62   | 14  | Just William                                                                                                                                        | UK ch TV sitcom, in title role, William Brown |
| 62   |     | CROOKS ANONYMOUS                                                                                                                                    |                                               |
| 62   |     | Fair Exchange                                                                                                                                       | US TV soap/sitcom                             |
| 63   | 15  | GO KART GO!<br><i>With John Moulder-Brown, Christopher Witty, Jimmy Capehorn, Frazer Hines, Pauline Challenor, Melanie Garland, Robert Ferguson</i> | In central role, Jimpy                        |
| 67   | 19  | UP THE JUNCTION                                                                                                                                     |                                               |
| 69   | 21  | THE SMASHING BIRD I USED TO KNOW                                                                                                                    | (puh-lease!)                                  |
| 69   |     | MY LOVER, MY SON                                                                                                                                    |                                               |
| 69   |     | WEDDING NIGHT                                                                                                                                       |                                               |