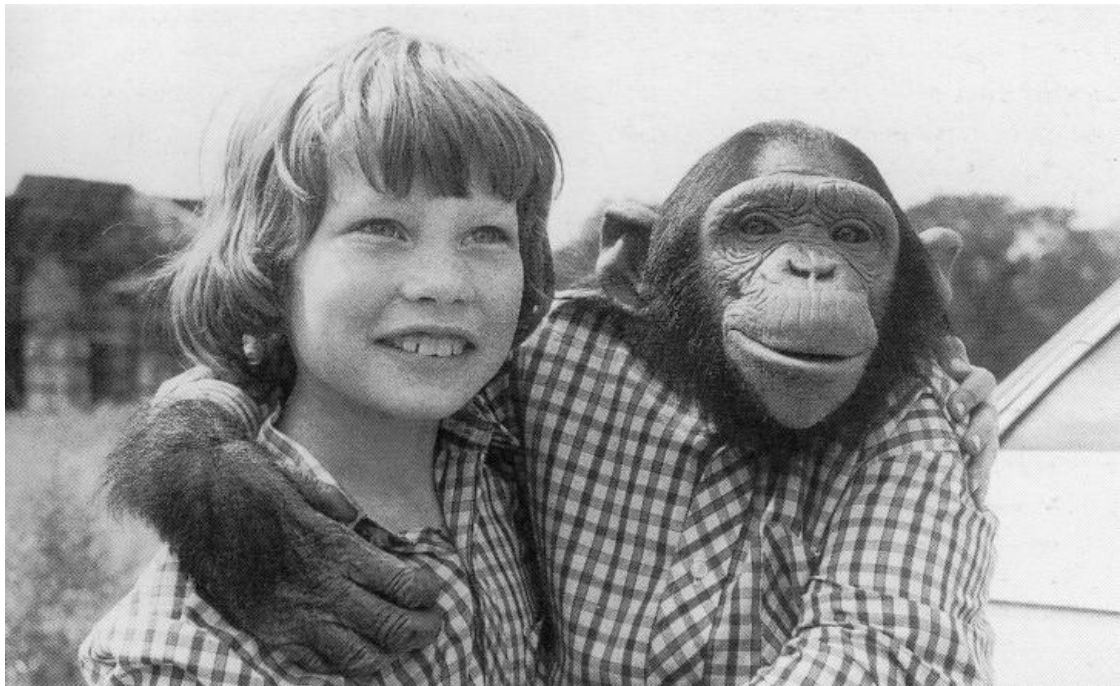


Dexter Fletcher

Titles: 9 Sources: 1 Stills: 2

Born: UK; January 31st 1966
Younger brother of Steve Fletcher and Graham Fletcher



*In "Fruit Gum kid" mode with the C.F.F.s matinee serial "**CHIMPATES**", age 9*

Source: Moving Picture Boy

Atypically sensual of feature for a British boy, Latin-faced Fletcher has had an interesting screen career, given the paucity of British films being produced as he grew through late boyhood and adolescence. After the obligatory stint with the Children's Film Foundation, he had a small but showy role in Alan Parker's "**BUGSY MALONE**", an even smaller one in "**THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY**" as a kid who "guards" gangster Bob Hoskins' car in a Brixton street, and then played freak-show entrepreneur Freddie Jones' boy lackey in "**THE ELEPHANT MAN**", who ultimately takes pity on Merrick and helps spirit him out of France.

At this age (14) his diminutive stature and wide sensual mouth made him a highly striking figure, and his stage appearances with the Royal Shakespeare Company demonstrated that there was real theatrical talent to match his sultry looks. None of this was particularly evident in his bread-and-butter TV role in the older kids' series "**Press Gang**", nor in Derek Jarman's miserable post-modernist "**CARAVAGGIO**" (86), where he briefly played the artist as a youth, toying with a "gay" (ie pederast) admirer as though he were a contemporary rent-boy requiring payment for his looks rather than his sexual services.

A similarly ambivalent role came with Bob Hoskins' directorial debut of "**RAGGEDY RAWNEY**", a quirkily continental film in which Fletcher starred as an army deserter hiding out



The narcissistic heterosexual youth with a penchant for striking homosexual poses – Derek Jarman's interpretation of "CARAVAGGIO" had little to do with the artist's life and everything to do with the narrow sensibilities of 1980s gay culture. (Perhaps he didn't have time to study any of Caravaggio's paintings..) Fletcher's smouldering looks, on the other hand, were completely in tune with the Renaissance Italian ideal of male beauty. Source: Moving Picture Boy

in women's dress among a travelling Gypsy band. To his credit, Fletcher seems to have resisted the twin temptations of decamping to California, where film roles are easier to come by, and launching himself as a music performer. Perhaps more will be seen of him on the London and New York stage in years to come than as a leading man of film and TV, but it is certainly a pity that his slated role to play Chaplin as a boy (see below) never came to fruition. He would have been eminently suitable for the part. Like Terry Kilburn in the 1930s (who did go to Hollywood), Fletcher's London accent disbars him from emerging as a talented young lead to rival the River Phoenixes, Leonardo DiCaprios and Keanu Reeves's of the US.

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

“Dexter – one of the few remarkable child actors who are clearly going to be remarkable adult actors – followed two talented elder brothers into the profession: Steve (born 27 March 62) and Graham (born 3 November 63, now Graham Fletcher-Cook). His 1972 film debut was in a short Road Safety film, and his role in the “**Steptoe**” spinoff was marginal to say the least. He had a genuine lead in the first “**CHIMPATES**” series for the Children’s Film Foundation, but sprang to worldwide notice in the small part of “Babyface” in “**BUGSY MALONE**”, giving a sublime bit of method acting before yelling “Geronimo!” and hurtling off to rout the forces of evil with a baseball bat.

After “**BUGSY**”, Dexter was retained on option for two films that failed to materialise, one for Alan Parker and one for David Puttnam. The latter was to have been a Charlie Chaplin biopic, with Dexter playing the great man as a child, but Chaplin himself vetoed the project.

During 1977 Dexter played Puck in the Royal Shakespeare Company production of “*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*”, and a year later repeated the role (non-singing) in Benjamin Britten’s operatic version at Glyndebourne. Also in 1978 he played – quite magnificently – the classic role of Gavroche in an Anglo-French TV film of “**LES MISERABLES**”, confirming not only his intelligence and passion but an enviable command of physical acting: his death-fall when struck by a bullet in mid-stride, the instantly lifeless body flopping into the gutter like a rag doll, was amazing.

With searching, sometimes baleful eyes and an upper lip so long and curling that it made Gordon Gebert look positively under-developed, Dexter’s face was always watchable, but his talent came across almost as strongly on radio. A further spell with the RSC in 1982 gave him added stage experience. None of this was to be wasted.

At 17, still looking a mere kid, he played a sort of modern-dress Puck in a whimsical documentary on Covent Garden, and had a good secondary role in the crew of “**THE BOUNTY**” (84). Then he played Al Pacino’s long-suffering son Ned in his older phase in the churlishly under-valued “**REVOLUTION**” (85) – the earlier Ned being taken by the

impressively dour Sid Owen (born 12 January 72).

Dexter next played, with sly humour, the decorative hero-as-youth in Derek Jarman’s “**CARAVAGGIO**” (86). Then, after small parts in two bizarre films, Ken Russell’s “**GOTHIC**” (86) and Bob Spiers’ “**DIDN’T YOU KILL MY BROTHER?**” (87), he had a romantic lead in Bob Hoskins’ “**RAGGEDY RAWNEY**” (88) as a young gypsy deserter from a middle-European army.

After a small part in the disappointing “**WHEN THE WHALES CAME**” (89) came another lead in a misconceived version of “**THE RACHEL PAPERS**” (89) – some way after the novel by Martin Amis (born 25 August 49), who had once himself acted as a near-child in “**A HIGH WIND IN JAMAICA**” (65).”

[no listing in “The International Motion Picture Almanac 1994” or “The Virgin International Encyclopedie of Film”]

FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Age	Title	Role
deb 72	6	MIND WHERE YOU'RE GOING	Road Safety film
73	7	STEPTOE AND SON RIDE AGAIN	
76	9	CHIMPMATES (1st series)	C.F.F. 6x serial
76	10	BUGSY MALONE <i>with Scott Baio, Jodie Foster, Florrie Dugger etc</i>	as "Babyface"
78	12	LES MISÉRABLES	UK/France TV, as Gavroche
79	13	THE LONG GOOD FRIDAY	as kid in Brixton street
80	14	THE ELEPHANT MAN	
81	15	4D SPECIAL AGENTS	C.F.F.
81		MEMOIRS OF A SURVIVOR	
84	18	THE BOUNTY	
85	19	REVOLUTION <i>with Sid Owen</i>	
86	20	CARAVAGGIO	in title role as a youth
86		GOTHIC	
87	21	DIDN'T YOU KILL MY BROTHER?	
- -		Press Gang	UK ch TV serial
88	22	THE RAGGEDY RAWNEY	in title role