

Just William

UK TV series : 1994 : dir. David Giles : BBC : 12 x 25 min
 prod: Alan Wright : scr: Alan Baker & Simon Booker : dir.ph.:
[Oliver Rokison](#); [Guy Edwards](#); [Tiffany Griffiths](#)
 Tiffany Griffiths; David Horovitch; Polly Adams; Benjamin Pullen; Rebecca Johnson;
 Gillian Martell; Miriam Margolyes; Mollie Sugden; Joan Sims; Freddie Jones; Ian Kelly;
 Adrian Ross-Magenty; Lindsay Duncan; Lil Roughley; Robert Austin; Charlotte Williams;
 Basil Moss; Helen Ryan; Louisa Lawrenson; Tim Preece

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Scamp ahoy! In a perverse way, William is another kind of mother's dream. The escapades of her nephew that so delighted Richmal Crompton are the source of William's enduring appeal. He is the quintessential English boy, with just a soupcon of middle class decorum under the grime.
 Source: Radio Times

Radio Times feature items:

"Even if you're not a bookworm you've probably heard of Britain's most famous schoolboy, William Brown. Oliver Rokison plays the mud-spattered hero in BBC1's six-part dramatisation of Richmal Crompton's **"Just William"** stories, starting Sunday. I've dusted down my conker collection already."

"The adventures of Richmal Crompton's mischievous but engaging schoolboy, William, have delighted children and parents¹ alike since 1919. Now a new generation have the opportunity to tear themselves away from their computer games and for the next six weeks immerse themselves in William's escapades.

¹ No. The respondent noun to "children" is "adults", not "parents". None of your Family Values imperatives here, thank you.

This new family drama series has excellent credentials²: the cast includes David Horovitch and Polly Adams, with guest appearances from the like of Miriam Margolyes and Freddie Jones; and it is directed by David Giles who made **"The Darling Buds of May"** and independently produced by the same company that made C4's **"Rector's Wife".**

"Just William"

Channel: BBC1

Starts: Later this autumn.

Stars: Oliver Rokison

Synopsis: Primary school pin-up Rokison is back as Richmal Crompton's mischievous schoolboy, William Brown, in six more adventures. Guest stars include Lindsay Duncan. More info in our Parents' Guide, coming soon."

"The new series of **"Just William"** is showcasing the talents of some great comic actresses: last week Joan Sims played the inebriated housekeeper Mrs Miggs, tonight Mollie Sugden appears as Mr Brown's aged Aunt Florence.

Florence is drawing near to death's door, and for reasons best known to herself wants to see her great nephew William once more before she dies. But when William arrives he discovers his goody-goody cousin Francis (Guy Edwards) already dancing attendance. The perfect cousin is too tempting a challenge for naughty William Brown to ignore, so he sets about corrupting Francis by challenging him to join in various initiation rites of his gang, The Outlaws."

"If you want great drama, try **"Just William"** (17 December BBC1), when William decides that it is better to give than to receive (and then to receive because you've been so generous!)"

1st series:

- 2: "Finding a School for William"
William is determined to thwart his parents' plans to send him to boarding school.
- ?: "William the Great Actor"
Children's comedy series starring Oliver Rokison.

- 6: "William's Busy Day"
William goes in search of pirate treasure but finds only a mad woman and her accompanying band of children and animals.

2nd series:

- 5: "Parrots for Ethel"
Ethel is being pursued by two suitors who discover her love of parrots. They both separately buy her the gift of her dreams but, when the parrots fall into William's hands, Ethel ends up receiving two unpleasant surprises.
- 6: "William Turns Over a New Leaf"
In the last episode of the series William tries to take the vicar's Christmas message to heart by being helpful and honest, but he ends up wreaking havoc."

TV Times notes:

"Richmal Crompton's hero returns to BBC1 on Sunday in the delightful **"Just William"**.

- 6: "William's Busy Day"
William searches for pirate treasure and discovers a mad woman whom, along with various children and animals, he "rescues".
- 1: "William Clears the Slums"
First in a new series of the children's dramas based on Richmal Crompton's books. William responds to a call by Lady Walton for the citizens of Hadley to provide help for deprived children in the inner city.

What's On TV note:

- " "William and the Old Man in the Fog"
William's brother Robert becomes hot property when word spreads he's about to come into money. And who's behind the rumour? You guessed."

Sunday Times review and listings:

² Says the BBC's own magazine...

"The family teatime classic tradition is upheld with a new six-part adaptation of Richmal Crompton's early 20th-century stories. The BBC is assuming that the naughty, cheeky, anarchic William will transcend 75 years. But it will take more than a few mud-encrusted boys with catapults and hysteria-inducing frogs to convince the computer generation. William (well-played by Oliver Rokison) is neither naughty, cheeky, or just: he is a precocious *[sic]* despot who *appears* naughty, cheeky, etc, by virtue of the storylines. Martin Jarvis's recent Radio 4 version, in which he did all the voices (including "I'll thkweam and thkweam until I make myself thick") was better. For adults."

"A pleasing adaptation concludes with William in a particularly bizarre scrape. After crawling through a hole in a wall, he causes a flood in a home occupied by a batty biddy (amusingly overplayed by Miriam Margolyes). Meanwhile, the Outlaws, his mum, the emergency services and half the village gather outside, fearing him to be trapped in the brickwork. It is a rather daft story, and most of the excellent Brown family are absent, but overall this has been a good Sunday afternoon family series."

"William's career with the local amateur dramatic society is in jeopardy.

Ethel is being pursued by two suitors, who both hear that she has a love of parrots.

Christmas is thrown into disarray when William tries to be extra helpful. Last in series."

Unknown tabloid background item - "William the secret swot":

"The latest kid to play Richmal Crompton's lovable schoolboy rascal hides a guilty secret. "I used to be the teacher's pet," confesses ten-year old Oliver Rokison.

And not a word to Ginger and the rest of the Outlaws, but he is also regarded as a bit of a swot by fellow pupils at his prep school in Leatherhead, Surrey.

"I'm not the biggest swot. I'm somewhere in the middle," says Oliver. He was shocked when he was picked from hundreds of hopefuls to play William Brown in the BBC's lavish new six-part series. "I never dreamed I'd get the part," he says.

It meant he had a lot of homework to do because he knew nothing about William and his adventures. "I had heard of the name but I hadn't read any of the books," reveals barrister's son Oliver, who is more interested in solving crimes than schoolboy pranks.

"My hero is Sherlock Holmes. I would like to be a detective when I grow up. And an inventor. I invent things in my spare time. I'm currently working on a hat radio to wear at cricket matches."

One thing Oliver has in common with his TV character is lack of interest in girls, especially those like awful Violet Elizabeth Bott, played by Tiffany Griffiths. "I had to dance with her in one scene. It was not very nice. I much prefer acting with the other boys," he says."

No further information currently available.

See also "**BADKONAK-E SEFID**" and "**BASHU**" - both recent Iranian films, and subject index under **ARAB WORLD / MIDDLE EAST**.