

May 12th, 1952

ROSE LAWN,
KINGSGATE-ON-SEA,
BROADSTAIRS,
KENT.

Dear Derek Smith,

Many thanks for your letter in March. Please excuse this tardy reply. The Auto coming out at the same time as BB. on TV. brought me so many letters all at once that correspondence fell a little into arrear. So you were "astonished" to find that F.R. and M.C. were also "Ralph Redway"? As I think I mentioned in the Auto, only one reader ever guessed that little secret. I just loved writing the Rio Kid stories, and hope some day that Ralph will write a book about that interesting youth.

It is very pleasant to read in your letter that in pessimistic moments you find relief in a Bunter book. There are so many Dismal Jimmies about in these days, that I really think there is room for one cheerful author!

I am afraid that "Jack" is on the deferred list for the present, also Carcroft. You are right about the "Comet" strip! I have no hand in it. It is just one of those things! I think you are right too about the juvenile literature of the present day: it seems to me worse than in 1880,--which is saying a lot!

I was very pleased to hear of your friend who likes "Len Lex". I liked him very much myself when I wrote him for "Modern Boy";- but I hardly ever hear about him now.

"Oakhurst" and "Ferndale" are not yet published. They were written some years ago for a Manchester publisher, Sankey Hudson's: but these be days of delay! "Headland House" and "Sparshott" and "Topham" went into the discard when I began the Bunter and Tom Merry books, and I think are now all out of print. But I have some old numbers about, and as you are interested, I am sending you one of each issue with this letter.

Yes, I think it is generally agreed that Bunter on TV. was a good show, in spite of some disgruntled critics. I thought Gerald Campion an ideal Bunter. Of course there were little drawbacks, but one must make allowances for adapting a whole book into a half-hour play. I confess that I enjoyed every play: not less than my own brief appearance on TV. at the beginning of the series.

Thank you once more for a very pleasant letter.

With kindest regards,

Frank Richards