

October 22nd. 1949.

ROSE LAWN,
KINGSGATE-ON-SEA,
KENT.

Dear Frank Snell,

Thank you for a kind, pleasant, cheery, and altogether jolly letter, --the kind of letter I like to read. There are so many Dismal Jimmies about that it is a real pleasure to contact somebody who thinks, like myself, that the world is a jolly old place, with all its little imperfections. I am very glad to hear that Timo is still going strong--bless his little doggy heart. My little Sammy is, true, a cat: but he seems to have all the manners and customs of a dog--added to which, the cheek of Old Nick! He likes to go to sleep on my typing stool: and when I find him thereon, I just haven't the heart to push him off, so I get something else to sit on and leave him to it. Only when he has a fancy for testing his claws on type-written sheets, I have to exercise a gentle restraining hand. I think I told you that some time ago he damaged his paw. It is quite well again now: but while the damage lasted, he could not negotiate the staircase, --and he would plant himself at the foot, and yell forme to carry him up, my study being upstairs. As you tell me you would like a photograph of the Old Bean, I am sending you one with Sammy in it, which was taken a few weeks ago. Youth and crabbed Age together ----or hims ancient and modern, as it were!

Many thanks for the cutting from the Mirror. I had one but gave it away, and am very glad to have one to keep. The Old Godger wrote me a delightful letter: he turned out, as I never should have guessed, to be Ed. Radford, author of a good many works of reference, and of thrilling novels, such as "Who Killed Dick Whittington?", and "Crime Pays No Dividend". His Live Letters certainly is the brightest spot in the Mirror. I am returning his letter to you, after reading it with pleasure: he does seem to be a very kind and pleasant fellow. What a lot of good fellows there are in the world. One of the best called on me yesterday, a chap named Thomas of the Manchester Evening News, for an article on the subject of my extremely unimportant

self for a South African paper,--the "Outspan" of Bloemfontein. My venerable chivvy was photographed for reproduction in that paper. You can bet I was interested when he told me that Franks Richards, plus Bunter and Tom Merry, is quite well known in S.A., where he was with the R.A.F. in the War days.

You are right--I never dreamed in 1906 that Bunter and Tom Merry, Frank Richards and Martin Clifford, would still be going strong in 1949.---still less did I dream it when I was dipping a pen in the ink to write my first story in 1890! It really does seem rather a long innings: and the wicket is still up: seventy-and-some more not out, and a hope of making a century!

I am glad to hear that you are looking forward to Tom Merry's Annual. I really think that you will like it. It truly is an amazing production. The Tom Merry's story is as long as a Bunter book: and that doesn't fill half of it! King of the Islands, Rookwood, and Carcroft--and the Bounder of Greyfriars turns up in a short story. The more I look at it, the more I wonder how it can be done. I have not seen anything like it, since the ~~war~~ days when they used to give me Annuals at Christmas in the far-off eighteen-eighties. My game leg is rather in the way of "strutting": but I own up that I feel as pleased as Punch, and then some: especially with the news that 14,000 had already gone, and that it is still going fast. It will be out on November 1st.---just a week after the "Secret of the Study"; which has been delayed, but is due on the 24th.

The Billy and Bessie books came out last week. Now I am taking a spell off from both Bunter and Tom Merry, to write a little book I have long had in mind, of a more serious kind, called "Faith and Hope": which I hope won't make my old readers fear that Frank Richards is becoming a bore.

With kind regards,
Always yours sincerely,

Frank Richards