

January 9, 1946X.

ROSE LAWN,  
KINGSGATE-ON-SEA,  
KENT.

Dear Mr. Gander,

Many thanks for the S.D.C. received this morning, and your letter therewith, dated Dec. 6. Your remark that it will be "getting near the festive season"; but actually the festive season has come and gone, before your letter arrived. I need not say that I was ~~very~~ extremely interested in your article on the subject of my unimportant existence--to such an extent, that I sat and read it through after breakfast, instead of keeping my usual appointment with Remington! Really it is good reading; and I think that I should be equally interested if it were all about somebody else!

I had a spot of reminiscence in reading Mr. Leekeny's article on the "Big Budget": a paper I had almost forgotten. It reminded me that in my early twenties I used to write sometimes for that paper, I met Maas only once; but H. Wentworth James, of course, I knew very well. Those were the days! All the paper you wanted, and next to nothing!

You are right in thinking that the paper shortage is still severe here. Shops get more wrapping paper and so on; but newsprint is still a precious rarity. No doubt there is a spot of muddle and mismanagement about somewhere--I cannot help thinking that we should be better off with fewer official persons looking after us. Still, things are slowly getting better: we shall get back to normal some time; and--as Shakespeare very nearly said--all's well that ends well!

I shall pass on to Merrett's your very useful hint about having a title to each series. This seems to have been overlooked. These good people are still hung up for paper---with the works of Frank Richards, Hilda Richards, Winston Cardew, and Michael Blake accumulating on their hands! But oddly enough, they seem to have better luck up in Manchester: for a publisher there has asked me to start two new series of school stories, and I gather that these will be on the market in the near future. You may perhaps have heard of Sankey Hudson and Co, a very well-known firm in those parts, of Chapel Street Manchester. So I hope that our young friends will soon be reading "Oakhurst School" by Frank Richards, and "Ferndale School" by Martin Clifford. At present I am turning out 30,000 words a week---

equal, I think, to my old output in pre-war days. But I have every hope that when paper becomes more plentiful ~~that~~ I shall increase it to 40,000. It is just lovely to be at work again with the type-writer making continuous music to the ear.

I was quite startled by your perspicacity in the matter of "Boy without a Name", "School and Sport", and "Rivals and Chums." You have it exactly right: the first and last were genuine goods, but "School and Sport" was written by an interloping hand, and I never heard of it till it appeared in print. In places the imitation is close, but the whole thing does not hang together, and the endless lists of sporting events do not make a story---Homer's Catalogue of Ships is quite enthralling in comparison! I am not certain of the writer, but I think it was written by a man named Samways, who seems to have suffered in those days from an ineradicable impulse to butt in where he had no business. On the other hand, the "Howell" idiocies were mainly, ~~infringed upon~~, perpetrated by Pentelow.---though even the Howell stuff was sometimes, I think, done by O'Mant. Thank goodness, I am now clear of this kind of thing, of which my present publishers would not dream, even in a nightmare!

Since my Pacific broadcast, I have been on the air at home, but I suppose you don't pick up our home services in Canada. It may interest you to see the copy of the Radio Times in which my talk was announced, so I enclose one. It was in the Light Programme on Wednesday January 2.

No, my benighted autobiography has not yet seen the light. I gather that my former publishers don't like some parts of it, and this has caused uneasiness. The real trouble I suppose is that I was born in Victorian times, when young people were taught to tell the truth: and habits formed in youth cling in age. I just can't be modern, in this matter. However, I shall turn over in my mind the idea of writing another book without a single word of truth in it---and perhaps the publishers may like that better!

However, I am not bothering about autobiographies much, now that the post-war demand for my real work has set in. What I want to do is what I have always done---write school stories, 30,000 words a week make me happy---and I shall be happier still when it rises to 40,000. So very likely my article in Hutchinson's Saturday Book is all that the public will ever hear about Frank Richards in the autobiographical line.

With kind regards,  
Yours sincerely,

Charles Hamilton