**Roger Casement and Major John MacBride**

**Irish Times**

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A chara, – The previously unpublished letter from Roger Casement dated May 1913, (“South African letter shows Casement’s devotion to Ireland,” July 7th) calls to mind the common links between Casement and Maj John MacBride.

While MacBride was leading the Irish Transvaal Brigade to fight with the Boer Republics against the British in 1899-1900, Casement was a British official in nearby Portuguese East Africa and was outraged by that venture. On Casement’s return to Dublin that same month of May 1913, he and MacBride had lunch, discussing their time in South Africa.

Casement wrote to Alice Stopford Green, “Can you imagine the feelings of an English colonel who had given up his sword to an Irish Rebel?”

Several Casement biographers write that this meeting, at which they both realised that their respective families hailed from neighbouring glens of Antrim, provided the impetus for Casement to cut his tie with Britain and later seek to emulate MacBride by forming an Irish Brigade in Germany to fight in the Easter Rising.

Within a few years both men were executed by the British, MacBride almost certainly for his role in South Africa, and Casement as revenge on a “traitor”.

Now they both lie a short distance from each other in Arbour Hill and Glasnevin.

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