**Sidney Clipperton saga**

**Letter to Irish Political Review**

Dear Editor,

Three articles in the December issue of the Irish Political Review that mention my role in Irish affairs have made a short response necessary.

Regarding the first item (p. 4-5), I won’t be celebrating the centenary of Northern Ireland. Nothing admirable came out of that separatism, most especially Stormont, a ‘factory of grievances’. Devolution was a curse and a snare - a holding operation that lasted a hundred years. We may agree.

I must however repeat I was uninvolved in creating or launching ‘Democracy Now’. Indeed I do not even recall how or when Kate Hoey, became President of the Campaign for Labour Representation. In neither instance, do I remember having any communication with the now Baroness of Lylehill and Rathlin Island.

That Paul Hyde, in the article after mine (p. 17-18), accepts Sidney Clipperton had to be wrong about Naval Intelligence getting him to bring a charge against Blinker Hall's son for homosexuality is appreciated.

As to HMS Violent, I accepted, as Paul wrote in November that Clipperton was on that ship in 1918. My reference was actually copied from his own article which read “Forces War Records online provides the following information ‘Sidney R Clipperton J.31169 1914 Royal Navy Leading Telegraphist 1918 Hms Violent’.”

He now disputes his own statement by writing in December: “Since Clipperton was on the Queen Elizabeth in 1918, it follows that he was not on HMS Violent at the same time.”

Hard to win against such silent reversal.

Paul repeats, "There is no evidence of any kind which proves the material existence of the bound diaries during Casement's lifetime." However he knows there are many references to the diaries in official documents and about their handover to Scotland Yard by Mr Germain on 25 April 1916 after Casement’s arrest. If these police documents are also falsified there were many more in on the deception yet he often relies on such documents

No “independent witness” may have recorded seeing “the bound volumes” but several said, admittedly imprecisely, they saw something, usually photographs of pages. The much-relied on American journalist, Ben Allen, first wrote on seeing a Casement manuscript, “I glanced it over rather perfunctorily until my eye caught passages tending to confirm the gossip I had already heard concerning the document.” He did say what he saw was not in diary form, but it was a manuscript. He added gratuitously he would call himself “a rabid nationalist”.

Hyde also writes, “The present attribution of authorship would not stand in a court of law”. But that is an irrelevant assertion. We are making historical assessments not trying to obtain a conviction.

I have now seen the 24 pages of typed extracts from the diaries and the ledger sent by the police to the DPP on 5 May 1916. They consist “of entries evidently written by Sir Roger of his sexual habits with male persons both in England and abroad” (TNA DPP 1/46). This is an item I was not aware of before Paul mentioned it in an earlier article. It would be a remarkable achievement if the police had concocted such a mammoth account of Casement’s sexual encounters with numerous individuals in just two weeks, and left not a trace of their research in records.

Yours etc

Jeff Dudgeon MBE

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