**[Published in the September 2016 issue of History Ireland and responded to by Hyde in the November issue]**

Dear Editor,

In his article on the Black Diaries, ‘Casement Tied and Tested’, in July’s *History Ireland*, Paul Hyde reiterates that there were a number of differing accounts of how and when the diaries came into the possession of the London authorities. Some have argued before 1916 and others, even, that forgery work continued on them up to their release in 1959.

Until the distribution of the relevant Metropolitan Police (MEPO) files in 2000 at the Royal Irish Academy’s Casement Symposium there was indeed no hard documentary evidence.

However, in those MEPO papers there are two references to the diaries arriving from 50 Ebury Street on the precise date mentioned in the House of Commons in 1959. In a Special Branch minute of 22 June 1916, Superintendent Patrick Quinn wrote, “During the month of May 1914 Casement deposited with Mr Germain of 50 Ebury Street, Pimlico, S.W. some boxes containing books, etc. These books which included three diaries for the years 1903, 1910 and 1911, a ledger, an address book and a memorandum book were brought to New Scotland Yard by Mr Germain on the 25th. April 1916.”

This was on Easter Tuesday after Casement’s interrogation had commenced and is confirmed in the later reference dated 28 July 1916 that Paul Hyde does refer to. It is from a Metropolitan Police property list relating to Casement. There the contents of two trunks “brought to Scotland Yard by Mr Germain, 50, Ebury Street, on 25th. April 1916” were enumerated and detailed as including “3 diaries, 1 ledger, 1 address book, 1 memorandum book.” Discovery of the Black Diaries was entirely the result of a voluntary act by a lodging house keeper, Mr W.P. Germain.

I believe this mystery is one that can now be regarded as settled despite the earlier contradictory accounts. It indicates that Scotland Yard failed to investigate the lodging houses in Ebury Street where Casement stayed, even though the police were aware of the various owners’ names from an inspection in 1915 of his cashed cheques.

Had the Black Diaries been discovered a year earlier, 1916 history may have been different.

Yours sincerely

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