**THE O'NEILL/CASEMENT CORRESPONDENCE IN NLI**

NLI 36,650 (1-7) Letters etc from Sir Roger Casement to O'Neill of Clandeboy [Portugal], 1904-1905. 7 items. Presented to President McAleese by Hugo O'Neill of Clandeboy during her state visit to Portugal in 2002.

(1) 25 Oct. 1904: Union Club, Belfast. Refers to Francis Joseph Bigger of Belfast. Books being collected by Casement for O'Neill. His stomach pain diagnosed as appendicitis. Plans to set up school in county Galway and other activities in support of Irish language. Hopes O'Neill will visit Ireland and visit Bigger. 2 sheets.

(2) Nov. 1904 [postmark]. Postcard. Has sent papers re Tawin School Fund but is not seeking a subscription. Hopes to talk with O'Neill in 10 days time.

(3) Printed item: "Appeal for a schoolhouse at Tawin, Co. Galway". At head, in MS, "With Roger Casement's compliments". Note by Casement at end. Also at head: "Answered 11-11-04".

(4) 17 Nov. 1904: British Consulate, Lisbon. Casement is sending O'Neill 3 historical works on Ulster. Hopes to meet him soon.

(5) 28 Dec. 1904: c/o H.S. King and Co., 9 Pall Mall, London. Requests a Portuguese spinning wheel for John Horner of Belfast.

(6) 10 February 1905: The Quay, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim. Sends news clippings re death of Dowager Lady O'Neill. Refers to article in An Claidheamh Soluis on family names and to his own verses on Owen Roe O'Neill published in United Irishman. Still under care of surgeon although has left hospital. Is spending a few days with Bigger and hopes to go to Ballycastle tomorrow. 2 sheets.

(7) Casement's visiting card with 2 addresses in MS. [1904?]

**CASEMENT TO THE O’NEILL**

NLI 24547 (Acc. 3944) “Letter from Sir Roger Casement to O'Neill of Clanaboy expressing admiration and sympathy for the Portuguese people, and regret at their lack of leadership, 30 July 1911.” – to the O'Neill in Lisbon.

See also NLI 26978 Acc 4009 “Benburb: poem by Roger Casement, 1895.” Donated by Don Jorge O’Neill, The O’Neill of Clandeboye, 16 December 1982.

**THE O’NEILL TO CASEMENT**

13073/13i O’Neily/O’Neill O'Neill, Jorge Torlades 1849-1925 to Casement 4 letters out of 8 items in folder (Horgan critical of Irish Volunteers 30 December 1913); 2 in 1905, 13073/13i/5 of 6 January 1905: ‘I have just seen Gosselin’ (4 sides); 13073/13i/6 of 5 March 1905 mention of Gosselin, 7½ sides, p. 3 ends ‘your verses are delightful’. 2 in 1911 (2 sides with writing each: 9 January 1911 (‘R. 26 Feb 1911’) and 12 March 1911 (‘R. about 16 M’ch Denham ans 13 June 1911 from Denham too’.)

13073/13i/7 of 9 January 1911 ‘R. 26 Feb. 1911’ **(transcript below)**

13073/13i/8 of 12 March 1911 (**transcript below,** photographed both sheets and one verso with NLI number only)

[13073/13/ii 5th March actually 11 March 1905 - not by O’Neill but Cowper. **transcript below** Who says O’Neill?]

13073/46/xiv/9i & ii catalogued as “O’Neill” 1 letter; 18 October 1908. On The O’Neill’s crested paper. Refers to recent letters received from him. Letter from [Hugo] O'Neill to Roger Casement regarding his lack of correspondence and Casement's interesting letters, discussing wheels, his work in financial politics, and his family's ancestry, 1908 Oct. 18.

**TRANSCRIPTS OF 3 LETTERS IN NLI 13073/13:**

**5 March 1905 (not by O’Neill), 9 January 1911, 12 March 1911**

**To Casement from Francis Cowper not O’Neill**

**NLI 13073/13/ii of 5 March 1905**

13 Rua João de Deus 3 Estrella

Lisbon

11 March 1905

**[At top in left margin:]** Lady Gosselin leaves for London on the 26th over land and the body will go by sea.

My dear Casement

Yours of the 28th Feb found me ill in bed with a dangerous attack of influenza which affected all my weak points – heart, lungs & intestines. I suffered dreadfully and almost thought I was booked for a better world but fortunately am now getting better, and must hope no relapse will take place – such a lot of people are dying here this winter in consequence of the unusually cold N.E. winds. I caught it at poor Sir Martin’s funeral.

I can understand your great grief at the loss of such a good friend. He was very fond of you, and always spoke of you in the most kindly terms. Poor Sir Martin! I was dreadfully cut up at hearing the sad and unexpected news.

Only four days before he was in such high spirits and full of fun at a dance at the Legation on the evening before he started for his trip with the Fleet, his fatal trip. I think he must have caught a chill and want of care and proper treatment from Vigo towards Lisbon was probably the cause of his sudden demise. Poor Lady Gosselin only reached Busoro?? In time to say goodbye to him for ever! Poor Woman!

His death caused a profound impression here as he was universally liked by everybody. In fact no one could help liking him. The Portuguese Government undertook the Funeral which was almost regal. I have seen nothing like it in Lisbon - nearly the whole population attended and expressions of sorrow were heard on all sides. I am sending you 5 numbers of ‘Seculo’ with detailed accounts. It was a grandly solemn but sad funeral at the cemetery – few were the eyes that remained dry.

I hope, dear Casement, that you are now all right again, and that your trip around the world will be an enjoyable one to you.

I am now in the full enjoyment of my retirement, but have not quite settled what my future plans will be, I have not yet decided on remaining here.

Churchill has not yet arrived to take up his appointment. I hear that young MacDonnell is in London again and tried hard to get Lisbon, but was too late. Write and let me know all about yourself.

Yrs Always

**[Unreadable signature. Not O’Neill’s writing but Francis Cowper]**

**NLI 13073/13i/7**

**9 January 1911**

**Casement note:** Rec’d 26 Feb 1911

Lisboa – 59, Rua das Flores **[printed with crest]**

9 Janry 1911

My dear Roger Casement

I don’t wish you to keep me forgotten! I have had so many bothers and displeasures since October 909, when I was very ill, that I have not been able to give my friends a sign of life and sympathy.

Now I am almost recovered and doing very well indeed. The political troubles have not, materially, altered?? me. I only wish this poor country will conquer peace & prosperity as the population are worthy of it.

I wish you my dear friend, a happy new year and don’t forget

Your affect friend

O’Neill

**NLI 13073/13i/8**

**12 March 1911 (mentions an incoming letter from Casement of 7 February 1911)**

**Casement note:**

R. about 16 M’ch 1911 Denham

Ansd. 13 June 1911 – from Denham too!

Lisboa – 59, Rua das Flores **[printed with crest]**

12th March 1911

My dear Roger Casement,

Your letter of the 7th Febr. was quite welcome, as I knew then that mine had at least reached you and found you well – your moral impressions are very nearly like mine, though I am older than you are and therefore more despondent – I hope this is not the case with old Erin, and that the denied ideals will now spring up as mightily and hopefully as they are needed.

When you come here, don't forget me and mind your promise to dine.

I am getting better gradually though not well yet, if ever! Ah ah events.

Ever your affec

O'Neill **[word almost seems to be ‘O’Neily’]**

**CASEMENT TO F.J. BIGGER (WITH O’NEILL MENTION)**

**NLI 13158/1/50 (original manuscript and two typed copies)**

**n.d. ‘1908’ it says on typed copy but probably 26 February 1911.**

Gresham Hotel,

Dublin.

Sunday.

“Private” in case you should

be disposed to at it!

A Cara dil,

I see you are to lecture at Gaelic League this week and I hope to be there to see you then. Is there any chance of you bringing Bulmer up with you? I’ll pay the railway fare to and from Belfast if you’ll write him to join you. I want to talk to him and don’t feel I can get to Belfast this week as I had intended. I have fever on me and spent all day in bed. Of course it comes quickly and goes quickly and I may get all right and fit for the train any day – but I don’t feel so now.

Bring Bulmer with you as Secretary – I want to talk to him and you as a father.

Why didn’t you shave Lord McDonnell before he finished that unkempt definition of his self government for Ireland? I never read or heard such a hash of nonsense. He has been too long in India – where the Hague Tribunals go to!

Their “Judgment” on the Savarkar case is worthy of being “made in Ireland”. There is only one other European Judiciary and that’s this one could have delivered such a finding on such a case. Of course it was a put up job and both France and England went into Court with their tongue in their cheek and the “Judges” winked at each other.

Drop me a card to say when you will be in Dublin. I am here until Saturday only and then go back to Sasana and abroad for a month on a health trip. Come up before I go.

Heard from O’Neill from Lisbon yesterday. **[See O’Neill letter of 9 January 1911 for likely confirmation of receipt]**

Tell Bulmer at once please by telephone or otherwise I’m here and await his coming – if not with you, by himself. I’ll pay the expenses of journey, as it on public business, and I am a public officer. God save us all.

Yours

R.

**DUDGEON BOOK EXTRACT**

28, Wednesday On shore at Lisbon at 10 a.m. & to Avenida where long–legged boy types & sailor. Then to Largo Camões & to Taurus to lunch & then Largo again & young soldier lad (18 or so) in grey twill – Splendid – followed. To O’Neills house **[*The* O’Neill lived in some splendour at 59 Rua das Flores in Lisbon; at Estoril; and on the Boulevard Haussmann in Paris. In 1904, when Casement was consul-general in the city they had met twice – just prior to his two departures for home. On** the second occasion Casement dined with the family “in old Irish intimacy” as O’Neill described it. Sadly, he reported to F.J. Bigger on 11 December 1904 “I had only one moment to introduce him to my wife and family – and I can only add that we all like him very much.” Related to Hugh O’Neill, the Earl of Tyrone who reluctantly departed for the continent in the 1607 Flight of the Earls, Jorge O’Neill was recognised as titular head of the clan, hence his various titles – Prince of Tyrone and Comte de Tyrone.

Casement described Jorge as “the undoubted lineal descendant of Brian Ballagh (Brian the freckled) and of *Aodh buide* [Yellow Hugh] “who crossed the Bann” in that memorable expulsion of Norman settlers from Antrim, far back in the making of Ireland.”[[1]](#endnote-1) The modern Prince of Tyrone was seriously taken with Casement, whose interest in his other predecessors, extending to the more famous Shane and Owen Roe O’Neill, provided a welcome link to Jorge’s ancient homeland. It also boosted Casement’s long-held historic view that the O’Neills and their successors were the rightful rulers of Ireland as opposed to the Norman, English and Scots intruders. Yet things were always more complicated. Casement did not recall Yellow Hugh’s marriage alliance and treaty of 1269 with the Norman Earl of Ulster, Walter de Burgo.

For a quarter of a century, the Count corresponded with FJ Bigger in Belfast about antiquarian and religious matters and especially over an introduction he had commissioned him to write for *The History of the O’Neills*. He donated £10 toward the 1907 Glens *Feis*. Constant enquiries were also made about Casement, especially about his state of health because of the illness that led to him abandoning the Lisbon consulate. “Have you heard from that charming fellow Casement?” he asked on 31 January 1907 “I heard he was now Consul at Santos.” O’Neill was also a provider of port for Ardrigh, frequently sending FJB a case “of our country’s nectar.”[[2]](#endnote-2)] & down to Largo near Consulate where arranged things & on to Arsenal & Necessidades Palace [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] & several types & back to Avenida & then by Banco di Portugal an enormous offer about 9’’, lying on one side like Agostinho, but too late & so to Consul **[Philip]** Somers Cocks & off at 4 on board & “Ambrose” sailed for Oporto.

1. NLI Acc 4902 Folder 23 (now in MSS. 36199-36212) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. BCL Bigger Collection [↑](#endnote-ref-2)