**TNA FO 395/43**

**Casement to Nina Newman (sister Agnes Casement)**

**24 July 1916**

**This** 24 July l**etter may never have been sent to Nina if it is the original. See also 5 p. letter (typed) dated 27 July 1916 in NLI 13,077/1/5** ‘**Letter from Roger Casement to Nina [Agnes Newman] from Pentonville prison regarding his trial and appeal, and the revoking of his knighthood and C.M.G. insignia’. Maybe same item.**

**NLI 17409 is a typed copy of a very personal letter to Nina but dated 25 July 1916.**

July 24, 1916,

The chivalrous English paper compared me, on the first day of the trial, to “Crippen and other notorious criminals”. Such is the chivalry of the ..... This, too, whilst a trial for life was in progress!

My dearest Nina,

I have not written to you before, since I was taken prisoner at Banna Strand – or 2 miles from it because I did not want to make you unhappy. Now I must write to you as the days are near their end as my earthly days go – I will write you again, please God, one day next week – before the last day – Today I want only to say a few things about “business”. I am so grieved to think of you alone in that far off land, but I feel sure that many have gathered round you these last weeks. (??)

I never had so many friends in my life as I find now when life is so nearly done – I asked Mr. Doyle to see you at once on arrival and tell you personally all he could about me. It was not much, as we could not see very much of each other. It was fine of him to come over and try and help me – You must thank him for me – I did it very badly.

He will tell you much about the trial – and the appeal – it was a farce of a trial – because I was powerless, really, to defend myself and had to listen to a stream of false testimony from many of the witnesses, in silence. Had the trial taken place in Ireland where it should have taken place I would have defended myself and the whole thing would have been different. To try me in London was equivalent of trial by “Daily Mail”, “Graphic” ?? by a court who had made up their mind before a word of the evidence was offered. Just ?? the appeal court – these they practically threw over the antique statute of Edward III, and found me guilty on a Doctrine or Dogma of allegiance. It was really just what I said in my speech from the dock – an appeal to the dark ages – Ah! well dearest old girl, I won't worry you over these things. You know all about me and you can form your own judgment – and some day (very soon) the truth will be known in America and all ?? them will see where the right lay – I know that history will say – at least in Ireland – for I have left a very clear record behind to be made public after the war – in the hands of a good executor who will see you and other friends when peace comes and place many documents in your hands crossing the “t's” and dotting the 'i's of many things dark to you now perhaps.

Today I am asked by the Governor of this prison to let the officials of the order of St. Michael and St. George have back the CMG insignia. You know I never opened the package in which it was posted to me – the seals are intact – you know how I did not desire it and how I sought to avoid distinctions of any kind. They were distasteful to me and my opinion was very freely expressed, and was certainly well known to the Foreign Office – I wrote a very brief acknowledgment to Lord Lansdowne of the CMG – and as you know I was not invested at Buckingham Palace at my own request. This was in June 1905. I think I gave you the insignia to keep, sealed and intact. If you can find it please send it to the Chancellor of the Order of St. Michael & St. George, Downing St. London, and ask them for a receipt – I should be glad if they should also send you copy of my letter to the Duke of Argyle at the time – and to Lord Lansdowne. They will be a good answer to the cowardly cads who have attacked me because I wrote Sir Edward Grey a polite letter in June 1911 on my (equally compulsory) knighthood. You know how little I desired that honour either, and how had I then been free to retire from the Consular Service I should have refused to allow them to go on with the ceremony. These things had been first gazetted before one is told of them – & I knew of the CMG & knighthood from the public papers.

My letter to Sir Edward Grey was an expression of gratitude to him for doing what was a very kindly act on his part – a personal expression of feeling – and since I was bound to accept the honour nolens volens at that time, I was bound if I accepted to acknowledge and to do so courteously. I would have much preferred to have been free to refuse. But to have done so wd have entailed also my withdrawal from the Consular Service and to have then retired meant the abandonment of the cause of the Putumayo natives. I had to see that matter thro' for the sake of the poor people – & so I had to stay on. I had to accept the honour – and now I am pilloried all over the world because I did something I could not help doing in a polite manner. A strange world – and my heart is indeed sick – Write if you can find the CMG and the Coronation medal and any other things, please return them all – I resigned them so far as I could divest myself of them all, in February last year. I set out for Norway then (29 Janry) intending to leave Germany but was not able to cross the Baltic and had to return from Rugen & wrote the letter thence – I had hoped to thrash the matter in person in Norway & if necessary further afield – but the Fates prevented me – that, dearest, in very brief space is a bit of the business I must ?? you to attend to. The full particulars of all this matter will reach you one day, & then you & my friends in USA will be able to prove how false the soldiers testimony was as to my visits to the camp & efforts to “seduce” them & all that ?? of falsehood they spun in the court. I was not responsible for St. Sullivan's defense – it was his line & he took it & kept me silent & I am very sorry I did not act on my earliest judgment and have no counsel at all. It would have been better but I was overborne and allowed counsel to go his way – to my cost – I think. Write to Gertrude about the CMG. I am sure the Coronation medal is in America with lots of other things. When the war is over get into touch with my executor. I have told him of you – and do all you can to clear my name from the malevolent attacks of those who have assailed me when they knew I was powerless to defend myself – Many of these may be in America – or were – I saw Poultney Bigelow's act of “friendship”! I will not call it by the name it deserves. Goodbye, my dear old girl, I will write you again – much longer and on other things. This is my poor attempt at a “business letter”.

Your loving Scodge.