

# Letters 1916–1923

Ordinary Lives – Extraordinary Times



## Case study – Roger Casement

**Roger Casement** (1864-1916) was an Irish nationalist, a diplomat, and a humanitarian. His role in the Easter Rising is documented in the many letters in the collection. Use **Letters 1916-1923** and **Wikipedia** to find out about Casement's activities in 1916, and how people in Ireland responded to them.

- 1 Read Roger Casement's biography on Wikipedia

When, how, and why did he return to Ireland from Germany?

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- 2 Find a letter from Count Georg von Wedel to Roger Casement in "**the Letters 1916-1923 database**" and read the "summary" in the box. What was Georg von Wedel's position?

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- 3 In the letter by Count Georg von Wedel, a "Mr Monteith" is mentioned. Use the information in "**the Letters 1916-1923 database**" the Wikipedia article "Irish Brigade (World War I)" and the website <http://www.irishbrigade.eu/> to find out who Monteith was, what the purpose of the Irish Brigade was, and how he was involved with Casement and von Wedel.

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- 4 Find the letter from Robert Monteith to Mary Florence Monteith (née McEvoy), sent on 30 November 1915. Describe the mood of the letter and why Robert wrote to her.

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- 5 Read the letter from Sir Roger Casement, written on 26 March 1916. What is the reason for his despair?

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- 6 On the eve of the Easter Rising in 1916, Sir Roger Casement was arrested at Banna Strand in County Kerry and accused of high treason. Many Irish people hoped to prevent his execution and petitioned the British government on his behalf. Find the letter from the Casement Relief Petition Committee to British Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith (31 July 1916). How are the letter-writers trying to convince Asquith to pardon Casement?

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- 7 Find the letter from M. J. O'Donnell, a member of Kerry County Council, to Alice Stopford Green, 28 July 1916. What was the opinion of the Kerry County Council on the Roger Casement trial? Is this the only petition that the Letters project has on behalf of Casement?

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## Challenge questions

- 1 What was the occasion of Casement's letter to Margaret Gavan Duffy on 2 August 1916?

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- 2 Who was Margaret Gavan Duffy's husband, and what was their relationship to Roger Casement? (Wikipedia)

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- 3 Read the letter from Father Edward F. Murnane to Margaret Gavan Duffy, dated 26 June 1916. Use Wikipedia and find out why Father Murnane, a Catholic priest, is worried about Casement's religion?

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- 4 Apart from Casement's letters, his diaries played an important part in the public perception of his life and achievements. Why were the diaries problematic and used against Roger Casement? (Wikipedia)

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