

GEORGE SHIELS 1881-1949

"My way of life has lain along altogether different paths. Since my return home from Canada, where I met with a serious accident, I have written a few things to amuse and educate myself. Some of these have gone farther than I ever anticipated, and now, knowing my own limitations and the difficulties I work under, I have a positive dread of being taken too seriously."

George Shiels, 1931

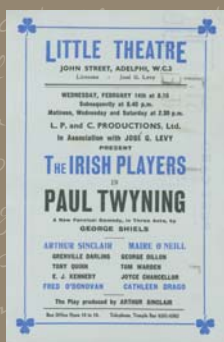
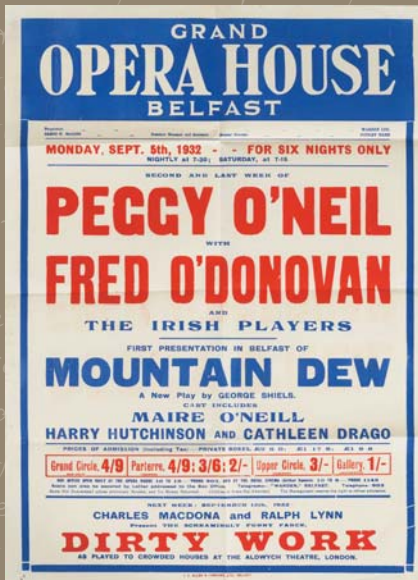
Shiels avoided the limelight and retreated into the solitude and comfort of his life in Ballymoney. He only ever went to see one of his plays performed in a theatre, although he must have realised the joy he brought to his audiences.

Ironically, for a long time, the one place where a Shiels play could not be watched was in Ballymoney! In the late 1930s, a group of local players decided to put on a performance of his work which they littered with swear words not in the original script. Shiels' brother and sister were in the audience and overheard two ladies discussing their shock at 'such a foul piece of theatre'. When George heard this, he promptly placed a ban.

The ban was not lifted until after Shiels' death in 1953 when the Portstewart Drama Group performed at the Ballymoney Drama Festival.



Michael Duffy and John Hewitt in the 1981 Arts Theatre production of "The Passing Day".



"As well as being able to trick the audience into loving his villains, Mr Shiels can write witty dialogue. The audience was over-joyed at the amusing expressions and turns of speech which kept cropping up all through the play."

Paul Twynning, reviewed in "The Irish Times" c.1922.



One of George Shiels' short stories, published in newspapers such as "The Irish Weekly Independent" and "Ireland's Own".



The Plays of George Shiels

Moodie in Manitoba
 Away from the Moss
 Felix Reid and Bob
 The Tame Drudge
 Bedmates
 Insurance Money
 Paul Twynning
 First Aid

The Retrievers
 Professor Tim
 Cartney & Kevney
 Mountain Dew
 The New Gossoon
 Grogan and the Ferret
 The Passing Day
 The Jailbird

Quin's Secret
 Give Him a House
 The Rugged Path
 The Summit
 The Fort Field
 Macook's Corner
 The New Regime
 The Old Broom

Tenants at Will
 Borderwine
 Mountain Post
 The Caretakers
 Slave Drivers
 Tully's Experts