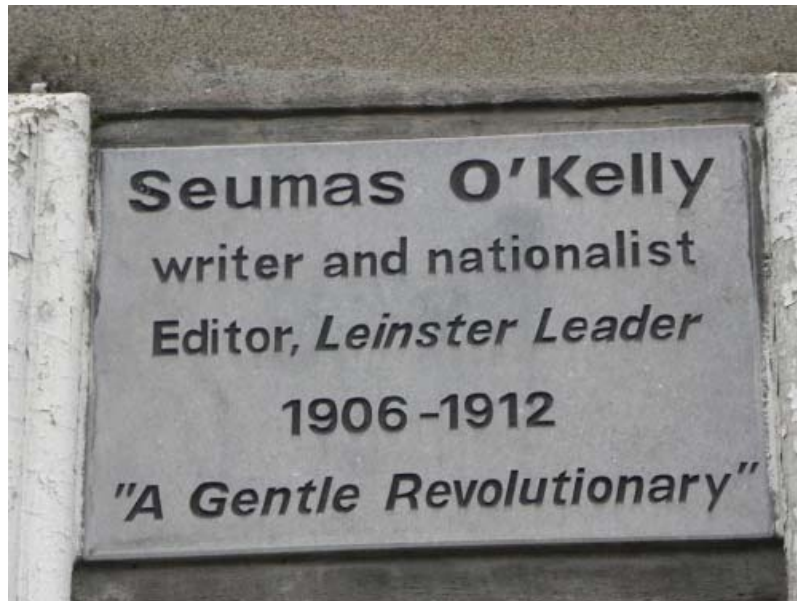


HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE
NAAS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



SEUMAS O'KELLY – A QUIET REVOLUTIONARY

One might be forgiven for not noticing a plaque on the wall of the Leinster Leader building in South Main Street, Naas. However on closer examination it bears the name -

“Seumas O’Kelly” – A Quiet Revolutionary.

Although he has been often neglected he was never the less recognised as an important contributor to the Irish Literary Renaissance. O’Kelly was a poet, dramatist, journalist and editor, reviewer and spinner of tales who in his short lifetime enjoyed success and influence. Although born in Loughrea Co. Galway, O’Kelly had very strong Naas connections being the editor of the *Leinster Leader* between the years 1906-1912. He started his career as a journalist with the Cork newspaper, *The Southern Star*. It was on leaving that newspaper that he moved as editor to the *Leinster Leader*. After the *Leader* he went to work with Griffith’s paper which his more militant brother had taken over and who was interned after the rising. Seumas did return to the *Leader* for a short period. He wrote numerous plays, short stories and novels. His short story, *The Weaver’s Grave* is among the most acclaimed of Irish Short Stories. A radio version of this, adapted and produced by Michael O hAodha, won the coveted Prix Italia for radio drama in 1961. A friend of Arthur Griffith, he worked with the Sinn Fein newspaper, *Nationality*” in 1916. He died prematurely of a heart attack following a police raid at the papers headquarters at Harcourt Street in 1918.

Another interesting Naas connection is the unusual four chimney house on the canal banks where he lived for a period during his period in the town.