

## **Did you notice..?**

A column for the curious stroller

Séamus Cannon

### **4. Monkstown's underground stream**

Did you notice the torrent of water that constantly flows under Pakenham Road? It is particularly audible where Pakenham Rd. intersects with the Hill on one side and Grosvenor Terrace on the other. This is the point where two streams have come together, the Monkstown Stream coming down from Monkstown Valley and Micky Brien's stream which comes down from Glenageary. The latter is also known as Rochestown Stream, and passes down through the grounds of Honeypark estate where a wildlife area has been created, to Monkstown Castle and behind the Old Monkstown graveyard. It must have been very muddy at this point on Pakenham Rd. before the streams were culverted and I remember seeing regularly shaped stepping stones when the roads were being excavated at this point some years ago. The stream discharges into the Old Harbour of Dun Laoghaire.

This stream was of great significance historically. It determined the site of the Dún of Laoghaire, fifth century High King of Ireland who established his fort above the estuary. Local legend has it that monks from Inispatrick fleeing from the Vikings arrived at the estuary in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and established a monastery where the old Carrickbrennan graveyard is now. This monastery was reputedly dedicated to St. Mochanna but its establishment has not been authenticated. There was a mill on the stream in the middle ages and a bridge crossed it at the top of Carrickbrennan Rd. The stream also influenced the siting of Monkstown Castle since a water supply was a basic requisite for a medieval castle.

When a site was being sought for a new harbour in the early years of the nineteenth century, attention focused once again on the only sheltered creek on the south side of Dublin Bay. At the time the coastline was rugged and barren and the small harbour at Dunleary afforded some little shelter to fishermen. Following a dreadful shipping disaster in 1807, that estuary became the site of the largest artificial harbour in the world, leading to the development of the town of Dun Laoghaire/Kingstown in the nineteenth century. Work began on the new harbour on May 31<sup>st</sup> 1817, all because our little stream entered the sea at that point.

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