

The Vikings in Ireland:

795AD: First Vikings in Ireland. Raided Lambay Island, off the northern coast of Co Dublin.

Until c. 840AD the Vikings who came to Ireland are said to have originated in the Norway region. After c. 850AD “visiting” Vikings are said to have come from the region of Denmark.

Monasteries were perceived as places of great wealth. They became centres of population = people to be kidnapped and traded on the slave market. Dalkey Island = a slave trading post.

The Vikings in Clondalkin:

* Clondalkin, in Irish = Cluain Dholcáin = Dolcan’s Meadow, or Field of Thorns. Most local historians have opted for Dolcan’s Meadow. Nowadays opinions appear to be mixed – did the Vikings first come to Ireland as raiders or traders, or both? In any case, eventually they became settlers.

833AD: Vikings first plundered Clondalkin. Probably attracted by its monastery = wealthy and centre of population = good source of slaves. Some Vikings remained or returned later to live in Clondalkin and it became a Viking settlement. Their king was Olaf the White (Amhlaidh) and their fortress settlement was called Dún Amhlaidh, built 852AD. A modern housing estate on the outskirts of the village is called Dunawley, but the actual site of the Viking fort has not yet been discovered. It’s not known exactly how integrated these Viking settlers became with the “native” Clondalkin population. They appear to have become at least somewhat Christianised, yet seem to have lived apart. They established their own church on Watery Lane in the village.

867AD: The son of an Abbot of the local Ua Ronan family (hence Ronanstown, an area of Clondalkin) attacked the Viking’s Clondalkin base at Dún Amhlaidh, slaughtered about 100 of them, and displayed their heads on stakes. The Ua Ronans were a strong family in the area. **Local Viking experts hold that Vikings did not have horns on their helmets!**

An tSlí Mhór (“The Great Road”), top of Monastery Road: One of the 5 great highways of ancient Ireland. It went from Dublin City via Thomas Street, through Clondalkin and Clonmacnoise and then to Clarinbridge in Co. Galway. Latest (unsupported) opinions seem to suggest that An tSlí Mhór split at the top of Monastery Road, between the blue bridge over the N7 and the roundabout at the top of Woodford Hill. One route led people down Monastery Road and directly to Clondalkin’s medieval centre, with its 6th-century monastery. The other route led to the (originally pre-Christian) St Brigid’s Well at Brideswell Lane and its cure for eye ailments.

Close by Woodford Hill, Monastery Heath housing estate = site of Mount St Joseph Monastery, built by the Carmelite Brothers in 1813. First monastery established in Ireland since the Dissolution of Religious Houses by Henry VIII of England. There were 2 boys’ national schools here, and many of their alumni became priests and travelled abroad (e.g. Australia) to teach. Daniel O’Connell, “the Liberator” was one of the school patrons. Much of what is known about the 1798 Wexford Rebellion was noted by Luke Cullen (Bro. Elias) who taught at the school and is buried in the cemetery. During WW2 (The Emergency), the Irish Army used Mount St Joseph as the HQ of the Army Intelligence Unit.

[Sources: Annals of Ulster, Dalkey Island Records, Joe Williams Archive, Ask About Ireland.]