

Did you notice?

A column for the curious stroller

7. The Lampstandards of Monkstown

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New lamp standards were erected along Monkstown Crescent as part of the recent re-development. These elegant, black sentinels are replacing the previous cast iron standards with their decorative bases which stood there since 1896. With the disappearance of the old standards go the last vestige of the tram lines which once passed along the Crescent. They were originally installed not as lamp standards but to carry the power lines for the electric trams. They were noticeable for being placed in pairs opposite one another all the way down Monkstown Rd. and as far as Dalkey. Cables were strung between them which in turn supported the power lines. The picture shows an electric tram in the early 20th century, but the power lines themselves aren't visible. They were erased by the photographer who regarded them as unsightly!



Photo: Tom Conlon

The original horse drawn trams were introduced in Dublin in 1872 and the Dublin Kingstown line was opened in 1883. The line was electrified in 1896, which was when the heavy standards were erected. The tram system was very popular and regarded as highly efficient and technically innovative by international standards. Of course, the electrified system wasn't without controversy: the select vestry of the Church of Ireland Monkstown wrote to the manager of the tram company to complain of 'the ringing of bells during services when passing the church!'

The trams went into decline with the introduction of bus transport in the 1920s. Buses running on the same routes as the trams would try to overtake them to 'grab' passengers. Eventually the Dublin United Tram Company replaced its trams with buses, and in 1944 the system was taken over by CIE. The last tram passed through Monkstown on 10th July 1949, the No. 8 to Dalkey. Locals realised

the historical significance of the event. Minister for Transport, Sean MacEoin speaking in the Dáil stated that: *"A force of 60 gardai including 2 superintendents, 1 inspector, 8 sergeants and 3 motor-cyclists were placed on duty over the route."* Despite this impressive display of force they were unable to protect the last tram from damage by souvenir hunters! The tramyard in Dalkey retains its name since that era.



Base of old tramline post on Crescent

At the far end of the Crescent, towards Dún Laoghaire you can still see some of the old lamp standards.