

Did you notice?

A column for the curious stroller

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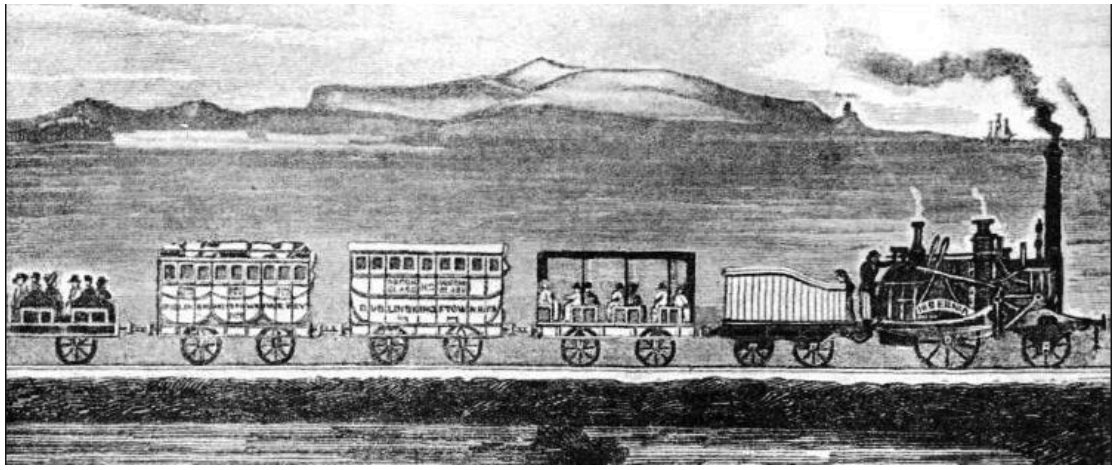
9. The Coastline of Monkstown

Did you notice that the road along Seapoint Avenue is well above sea-level? As you walk along, you're looking down at the railway and carpark at the DART station. In fact the roadway is a closer guide to the original coastline than the current boundary to the railway line. It was the construction of the railway that changed the coastline. In the early 19th century, this was a rocky shoreline overlooking the sea. In 1834 the railway was constructed on an embankment across the strand and in the intervening years this area between the road and the embankment has been filled in, creating a more gradual descent to the sea and more pleasant vistas for house owners. In front of Longford Terrace, where there hasn't been the same degree of infill you can see how the DART carpark is well below street level. The embankment is more evident in Booterstown where the bird sanctuary represents the gap between the original coastline and the embankment. Blackrock Park covers an area which was also filled in, coincidentally covering the original Black Rock which gave the town its name.

The railway company had great difficulty in negotiating with some of the landowners who were very opposed to the new mode of transport, and Lord Cloncurry and the Rev Sir Harcourt Lees of Maretimo and Blackrock House respectively exacted a very large amount of money for their cooperation. The railway company also bought Salthill House (later Hotel) because it required the land, and William Dargan, the engineer in charge had his men cut back the cliffs at Salthill. Stations were built at Seapoint and at Salthill.



Looking towards Salthill from Seapoint. The Salthill Hotel is prominent and the Cofl Parish Church can be seen in the top right corner.



The Hibernia of the Dublin and Kingstown Railway Company

One of the effects of the railway was to cut off access to bathing facilities for local people and it was due to the campaigning of Monkstown resident Charles Haliday that access was created by way of footbridges. There was also an elegant footbridge at the Salthill hotel, of which only a circular pillar remains. The railway company also saw some benefit and contributed to construction of bathing facilities at Blackrock providing an all-in return ticket plus bathing during the summer months.

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