

Eventually work recommenced in October 1861 when the contract was placed with the contractors Watson and Overend to carry out the work still outstanding between Goraghwood and Armagh, including the construction of the tunnel. 230 men were employed on the section between Goraghwood and Markethill and to speed construction, work also commenced on the Markethill-Armagh section. Eventually there were 1500 men working on the line. The major work of the line was of course Lissummon Tunnel. Originally planned to be 1604 yards long, it was extended to 1,759 yards, 1 yard short of 1 mile and the longest tunnel in Ireland. It was a considerable engineering operation which involved the sinking of 6 shafts along the line and mining and boring through rock from each shaft. The deepest shaft was sunk to 200 ft. and the debris was conveyed to the top in large buckets or skips. A reporter for the "*Newry Commercial Telegraph*" who visited the works gave a graphic description of the operations there. He describes journeying on foot from Goraghwood, where a bridge was being constructed to allow the line to cross the main line, and then through Jerrettspass. He goes on to describe arrival at the entrance and continues:—

"One would suppose that, after passing over so many hills, of no mean proportions either, through which no tunnels are to be cut, the hill at Lissummon would be of gigantic proportions. The supposition would not be wrong founded, and the work still to be accomplished by these hardy sons of toil will require, it would seem, superhuman exertions. The progress made at the South end, or that facing Newrywards, is merely of an initiatory character; but the 20 feet of tunnel will give some idea of the work on hands. The solid rock protrudes on every side, and a temporary wooden structure, arched, is erected — room being allowed between the wood and the rock for the masons to proceed with the brick work according as the miners advance.

This Southern entrance presents, even now, in its rugged state, a peculiarly grand and imposing appearance. The hill rises abruptly, and on either side the scenery is delightful, with the handsome little Church of Drumbanagher giving a marked but gentle touch to the view. Retreating Northwards, the upper strata over the Southern entrance for as good as a hundred yards has been cut away in the shape of a half moon. Mounting this hill, we stand over the tunnel, or rather over its future course. Its entire length will be about 1600 yards. At the North

entrance considerable progress has been made, but the most interesting and most novel portion of the work, is to be witnessed where the shafts have been sunk. There are now six shafts erected, and the men are busily employed — 'under the surface' — cutting and boring, mining and blasting. We were told that no adequate idea could be formed of their capabilities, unless they could be seen at work, and so, accompanied by Mr. Swan (for whose courtesy in showing us over the entire of the works we have to return our thanks), we determined on paying a visit to the workmen underneath. As we have remarked there are six working shafts sunk, and stationary steam engines are in operation at the four deepest shafts, the remaining two being worked by horse power. The depth of shaft No. 1 is about 199 feet; of shaft No. 2 about 200 feet; of shaft No. 3 about 133 feet; of shaft No. 4 about 113 feet. The other two shafts are not just so deep, as they approached the decline in the Northern side, which is not near so abrupt as at the opposite entrance, and are worked by horse power.

