

private Chamber, where we presume he communicated the information of which he was made the bearer. The interview was private. Up to going to press we did not learn if any serious fighting had taken place today at the tunnel. The report in town today was that a body of men numbering something about 300 strong, armed with guns, pikes, etc., had again today made their appearance in the vicinity of the works, determined, so says rumour, to be revenged on the men who had driven the English workmen from the place. Of course we cannot confirm this statement — we merely record the fact that such an allegation has been made."

On this occasion with the help of local people peace was restored. At least one man died in the construction of the tunnel. He was Arthur Devlin, a native of Tyrone, who missed his footing when getting into the bucket to go down and fell 170 feet down the shaft to his death. Michael Daly, whose job was described as "banksman in charge of the bucket operation", was charged with manslaughter through negligence, but was acquitted.

Continuing along the line, a shorter tunnel was constructed at Loughgilly with an embankment across Loughgilly bog. The line reached Armagh in March 1864, but because agreement could not be reached with the Ulster Rail Company on the use of their station, a temporary station was constructed on the outskirts of the town and passengers had to be ferried in. The line opened on August 25th, 1864 and the following year the company finally reached agreement with the Warrenpoint Company on the joint working of the Newry town link line, thus providing through traffic to Warrenpoint. Although now in operation the line continued to be beset by financial difficulties. It had to rely too much on the good will of the other companies who were basically in competition.

Although for a time it did share the Armagh station jointly with Ulster Rail that agreement did not work out, not least as a result of the exorbitant charges that the latter placed on the use of its services.

Eventually the Newry Company built its own station there. At Goraghowood there were the ongoing problems about payment for the use of services there and the reluctance of the main line company to work over the Newry line.

In 1866 just two years after it opened a receiver was appointed and there was some suggestion that the line should be sold. However, following what would

probably be described as "rationalisation" today, the line was allowed to continue to operate. In 1876 the Great Northern Railway Company was formed of an amalgamation of the Dublin-Drogheda, Ulster Rail, and the Dublin-Belfast Junction Companies. For the small independent Newry Company still in financial difficulties, the writing was on the wall. It was now in competition at Goraghowood and Armagh with the same Company.

The crunch came in 1878 when the Company could not pay for a locomotive it had ordered. The line was offered for sale to the G.N.R. and was absorbed into the larger Company in 1879. The line which had cost just under £400,000 to complete was sold for £60,000 cash and £165,000 in shares. During its independent lifetime the line had employed a total of 143, including 12 directors, 2 auditors, 4 clerks, 4 station masters, 34 porters, 8 locomotive drivers and various other tradesmen. There were on average four trains each way between Armagh and Goraghowood daily with much more traffic on the line into Newry.

Some technical detail:— the steepest sections were where, after it crossed the Armagh Road from Newry, climbing from Goraghowood to the end of the tunnel and dropping steeply into Armagh from Hamiltonsbawn.

Ten years after amalgamation with the G.N.R. Company, the line was to become not only national but world news when, on June 12, 1889, on the steep gradient outside Armagh there occurred the worst railway accident in the history of Irish railways. The Armagh Methodist Church Sunday School had organised an excursion to Warrenpoint and hired a train with 800 seats. As it turned out 940 boarded the train which left Armagh station at 10.15 a.m. In the townland of Killuney, as they were approaching the top of the hill the engine stopped. It was decided to split the train and the rear brake van was wedged with stones. When the train was divided (this removed the vacuum brake from the rear carriages) and as the engine prepared to proceed the uncoupled carriages were jolted and started to run back. They crashed into a following train, at 40 miles per hour, some distance down the line. Eighty died in the crash and 260 were injured. As a result of the accident new legislation on braking was introduced.

The line continued in operation until 1933 when, following a strike, the passenger service between Goraghowood and Armagh was withdrawn and the