

## **Conjoined Public Local Inquiries:**

### **Curraghinalt Mine Project:**

- Dalradian Gold Ltd LA10/2017/1249/F (PAC Ref: C005)

### **Curraghinalt 33Kv Project:**

- Dalradian Gold Ltd LA10/2019/1386/F- NIE Networks (PAC Ref:C006)
- Dalradian Gold Ltd LA11/2019/1000/F - NIE Networks (PAC Ref: C007)

### **Consent to discharge:**

- Dalradian Gold Ltd TrC 080/20\_1 - DAERA (PAC Ref: 2021/WHR01)
- Dalradian Gold Ltd TrC 081/20\_1 - DAERA (PAC Ref: 2021/WHR02)

### **Water Abstraction and Impoundment**

- Dalradian Gold Ltd AIL 2024/0008 - NIEA (PAC Ref: 2024/WHR01)
- Dalradian Gold Ltd AIL 2024/0009 - NIEA (PAC Ref: 2024/WHR02)

### **Dalradian Gold Ltd Road Abandonment Application (PAC Ref:DR001)**

#### **Statement of Case - Cultural and Linguistic Heritage**

We are a group of concerned residents from the Greencastle area with a particular interest and knowledge of the Cultural and Linguistic Heritage of Greencastle and the surrounding areas who wish to strongly object to Dalradian's large scale industrial plans which do not in any way fit the character of this area.

Greencastle is at the heart of what was known as Sléibhte Mhuintir Luinigh, Munterloney mountains and it is a very special place, a place apart. Renowned folklore collector Michael J Murphy was sent to Glenhull in the 1950's by the Folklore Commission, when here as 'a cultural intelligence officer'<sup>1</sup> he came to the conclusion,

'...there was no doubt at all that Glenhull was the heart of an **almost forgotten Folk Kingdom** as valid as the Ring of Kerry, more valid perhaps than the Kingdom of Mourne. Proudly referred to in English as Munterloney (in Gaelic: Muintir Lionigh) and comprising several parishes as well as an area of **ancient territorial lineage**' (Pg.19, Tyrone Folk Quest)

Murphy came and lived among the people of this area to really get a sense of who we are. John Cronin & Associates and Gahan and Long in their Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment and screening assessments never had a chance to truly understand this place when all they did was conduct desk top exercises and some very short walks of the site. You will never understand a place without walking amongst it's people because we are all connected to our place, there is a relationship there. A relationship in this area that has been one of respect reflected in the fact species such as the Fresh Pearlwater Mussel still survives, that we have salmonoids in our rivers when they are on the decline elsewhere. In Irish we say ' Cé leis thú?' as a translation for who are you but it means who do you belong to and it implies people and place.

Growing up in this area Irish words were commonly heard and still are in common use, sometimes unbeknownst to us, in our house we put on *geansaí's* and *brógs*, we walked down

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<sup>1</sup> Pg.7 Tyrone Folk Quest

past the *eas* and stayed clear of the *seoch*, we *ceap*'ed the sheep, we were scared of the *sailí* rod, nobody wanted to be an *amadán* or a *ciotóg*, we talked of families by their Irish language 'nicknames' - the *Seán*'s, the *Niall Bán*'s etc.<sup>2</sup> We knew locations by their townlands - Moninameal from Muine na Míol, Aghascribba from Achadh Scríobadh, Teeban from Taobh Bán etc. In Fact we have two Teebans - Taobh Bán éirí na Gréine and Taobh Bán luí na gréine, the bright side when the sun rises and the bright side when the sun sets, in English they are Teeban East and West but the Irish language really explains much better the difference.<sup>3</sup> Townlands were also used to group people together, for eg when we had Station masses they were done by townlands. A desktop exercise or the study of our 'built' heritage alone will not tell you about all of this.

To really understand why this oral heritage and why the sense of place and connection to the land here is so strong, as well as walk amongst our people you need to examine the historical and societal journey we have been on to get us to the stage where in the 2020's the Irish language is still bubbling underneath in this area.

### **Gaeltacht Mhuintir Luinigh**

As in the rest of Ireland the Irish language had been the dominant language in Greencastle until the English efforts to colonise Ireland and break the Gaelic order that had existed. As the English brought in statutes, orders and laws to outlaw the use of Irish the English language spread across the island. In the 1800's the Munterloney area had been described in the British parliament as 'Ye wilde barbarous mountains of Munterloney' in reference to how isolated, rural and rugged they were. Luckily, it was this isolated location that helped the area to act like an incubator for the Irish language, it maintained Irish as the living breathing everyday community language in the heart of the Munterloney area around Greencastle and Gortin and kept the English language out longer than anywhere else in Tyrone and across Ulster apart from Donegal.

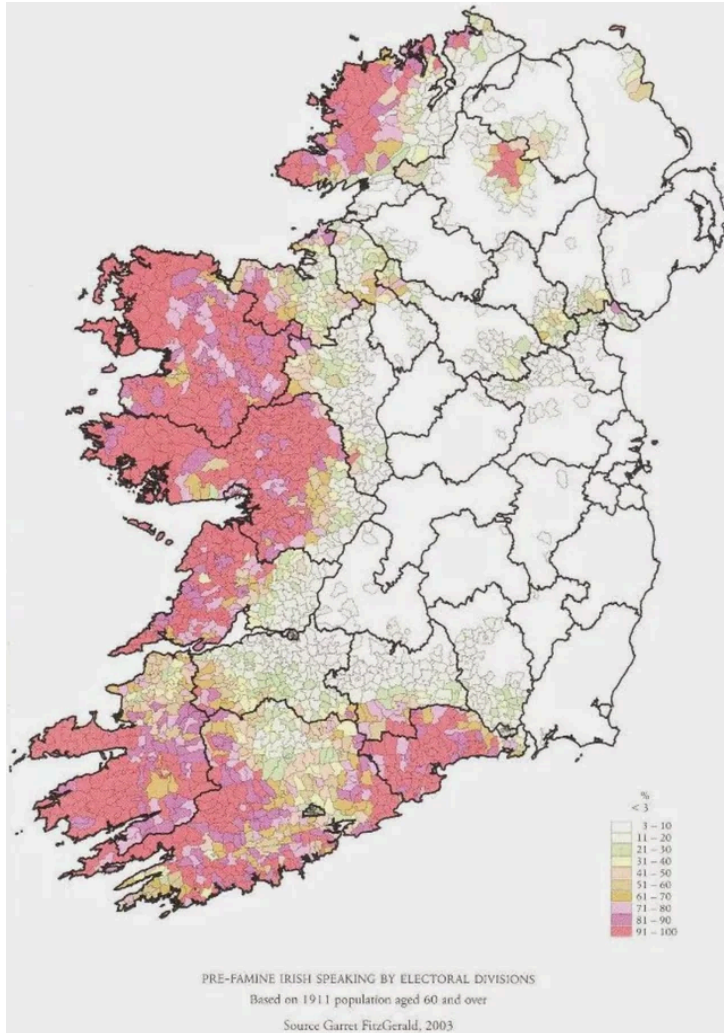
Garrett Fitzgerald analysed the 1911 census data and it shows us that the wider Greencastle area had a high number of Irish speakers, similar to strong Gaeltacht areas that survive today in Donegal, Galway and Kerry etc. Greencastle and surrounding areas were recognised as 'Gaeltacht Mhuintir Luinigh' (translates as The Irish speaking district of Munterloney).

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<sup>2</sup> Geansaí - jumper, bróg - shoe, eas - waterfall, seoch - sheugh, ceap - catch/block the path of, sailí - willow, amadán - fool, ciotóg - left handed person, Seáns - pronounced Shans, Niall Bán's - Niall of the white hair.

<sup>3</sup> 'Over the course of millennia, we have been developing our own idiosyncratic way of describing our surroundings. PW Joyce referred to it The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places ( 1870). He wrote: "This great name system, begun thousands of years ago by the first wave of population that reached our island, was continued unceasingly from age to age, till it embraced the minutest features of our country in its intricate network; and such as it sprang forth from the minds of our ancestors, it exists almost unchanged to this day."

<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/collops-and-fibins-the-lost-language-of-ireland-s-landscape-1.3160254>



While other areas had transitioned from Irish to English much earlier (language, customs and culture), the people of Greencastle stood strong against the pressure from the English colonisers.<sup>4</sup> Local people resisted the efforts of the English to make the native Irish seem inferior, to turn their backs on what they knew.<sup>5</sup> Mac Ionrachaigh (2013) states that colonialism

<sup>4</sup> Edmund Spenser, English poet and colonial emissary to Queen Elizabeth: 'It hath ever been the use of the conquerors to despise the language of the conquered and to force him by all means to learn his.' Edmund Spenser (Ó Fiach 1969:104)

People like Sir John Davies, one of the leading architects of the Ulster plantation had hoped, 'that the next generation will in tongue and heart and in every way else become English; so as there will be no difference but the Irish sea betwixt us' (Ó Fiach 1969:105)'.  
<sup>5</sup> 'Thus, by attacking the core of the Gaelic ethos, the colonising mission in Ireland was rationalised as a providential mission to civilise backward natives: 'The fact is that officially the Gaelic race, and its language and institutions, indeed its whole culture, was regarded as second class, and often deprived (Mac Síomóin 1994:46)'' (Pg.58, Mac Ionrachaigh, 2013)

'For cultural invasion to succeed, it is essential that those invaded become convinced of their intrinsic inferiority. Since everything has its opposite, if those who are invaded consider themselves inferior, they must necessarily recognise the superiority of the invaders. The more the invasion is accentuated and those invaded are alienated from the spirit of their own culture and from themselves, the more the latter want to be like the invaders: to walk like them, dress like them, talk like them.' Paulo Freire (1972a:151)

propagated the myth that, 'traditional customs were obstacles to survival'. However in our area and ironically in Curraghinalt where Dalradian have their current site, lived a man by the name Padaí Fheilimí Láidir Mac Cú Uladh, one of the finest Irish speakers and sources of folklore. Padaí embraced traditional customs and is famous for having made the last recorded rush-woven horse harness in Ireland, which can be seen in the Folk Museum in Mayo. Michael J Murphy, when describing Padaí Láidir he said, '...hardly a single aspect of folk tradition could one ask a question without Pádraig Phelimy being able to give a reply...'

Unfortunately despite their great efforts locally they couldn't hold back the force of the English language after partition and the new states refusal to cater for the existence of bilingualism in the six counties. The community transitioned from Irish speaking to bilingual to monolingual English with the last remaining native Irish speaker dying in the 1970s. It was the last remaining unbroken link with thousands of years of Irish from cradle to grave in this area.

Many scholars travelled to Ireland to record our unique dialect. Our areas linguistic heritage was preserved and celebrated in books such as *Sgéalta Mhuintir Luinigh* which was written in 1933 and recently republished in bilingual form 2015 due to demand.<sup>6</sup> Gerard Murphy argues that *Sgéalta Mhuintir Luinigh* represents what remains of Gaelic tradition in Munterloney.<sup>7</sup> Other scholars also wrote about our area highlighting how important this area is, books such as *Padaí Láidir Mac Culadh agus Gaeltacht Thír Eoghain*, again Pádraig Ó Baoill made many visits to the area to research this book. There were also many songs collected here from people such as Anne and Ned Tracey, in fact the original *Oró sé do bheatha abhaile* was collected in this area and other songs such as *Molly na gCuach Ní Chuileanáin* have their roots here. If you don't speak Irish you lose out on getting these insights into our area and cultural heritage impact assessments and screenings are incomplete without acknowledging this element of important heritage in this area. While this connection to place is not 'measurable' in a traditional mathematical way it is nevertheless present and shouldn't be ignored.

What's interesting is the legacy this has had in our area. The fact they maintained Irish longer here has left us strongly connected to each other and our land in a way other areas may not be. Other areas have to go back hundreds of years to find their last native speakers and those who maintained cultural traditions but we only have to go back to the 1970's and while Irish doesn't remain today as a fluent community language, its impact and the fighting spirit of our native speakers has left a legacy of our words and turn of phrase that impacts our connection to place. Michael J Murphy's book *Tyrone Folk Quest* gives an insight into why this is, showing the Gaelic traditions of station masses in townlands, céilíng, story telling, meitheal work etc had continued here. An interconnectedness ironically encouraged by our isolated location and which is something to be celebrated in this world where worries of social isolation and mental health are increasing, unfortunately Dalradian has been the biggest threat to our interconnectedness and social cohesion.

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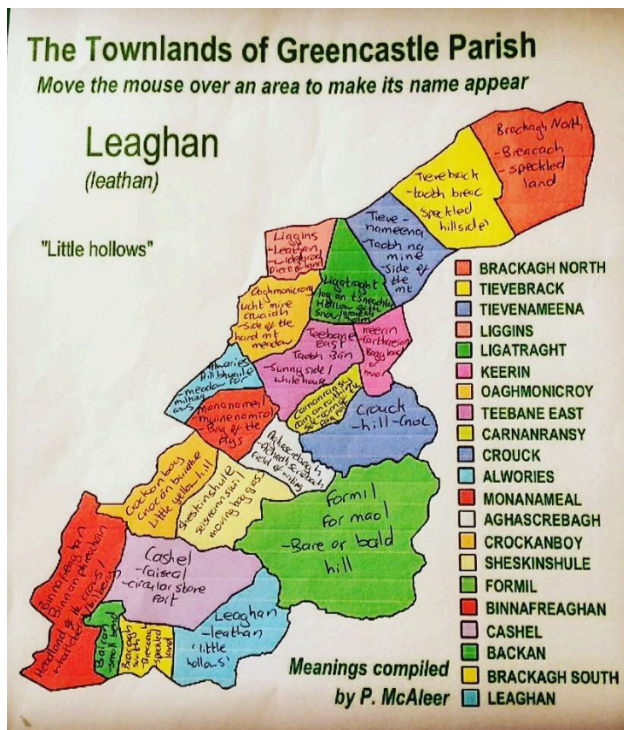
<sup>6</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkbYcQ4kap0> A recording from the launch

<sup>7</sup> Ó Tuathail, Éamonn. *Sgéalta Mhuintir Luinigh : Munterloney Folk-Tales*. Dublin: Irish Folklore Institute, 1933. Print.

This deep connection to our land should be nurtured and maintained, not under threat from Dalradian's plans. In fact it is this connection to place or *Dinnseanchas* which is driving our resistance to Dalradians plans, plans which have already had a detrimental affect on our community in terms of community wellbeing.<sup>8</sup>

### Preserving our cultural identity and dinnseanchas

We as a group acknowledge that we have much to preserve and promote for the future. We feel a strong responsibility to pass on all that we learned growing up and all that we learned about our area when we became fluent Irish speakers, a responsibility to keep the 'folk kingdom' alive so to speak, perhaps an innate responsibility to our ancient territorial lineage.<sup>9</sup>



We are very keen to promote our unique heritage and continue to develop connections to our heritage through our young people, to continue the work of Michael J Murphy in a way, except by passing the knowledge on as opposed to collecting it. Nearly 15 years ago we set up Óige Mhuintir Luinigh, an Irish language youth club to make sure all local children know about our linguistic and cultural heritage in this area. Townlands is one really important tool we use when trying to connect with our young people. The image to the left has been used as part of many including a very competitive quiz round to see who could name each townland correctly.

We also use them when working with adults, their own townland is how you get them sucked in first as adults love to fully understand the placenames around them.

Placenames help us visualise and this quote from Tyrone folk quest regarding Murphy's final

<sup>8</sup> 'Inevitably, the process of colonisation, whereby indigenous peoples throughout the world have 'been consistently, often violently, dispossessed of their cultures, languages and lands, not to mention their very lives' (May 2002:17), resulted in a tradition of native resistance in Ireland' (Mac Ionnrachtaigh 2013:60)

<sup>9</sup> 'Still today, the land comes alive through its placenames, in a way that a non-Irish speaker cannot perceive.'

<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/collops-and-fibins-the-lost-language-of-ireland-s-landscape-1.3160254>

'That intimate connection to place was severed by colonialism, and the conversion to English separated it further... the Gaelic language as a whole embodies a close connection between people and place. That intimate awareness of place is reflected in the precision by which the language describes the landscape. For instance, Gaelic has a copious vocabulary to describe different types of promontories such as mountain, hill, peak, cliff, or slope'

<https://sgoilgaidhlig.org/news/geur-bheachdan-gaidhlig-gaelic-insights/daimh-leis-an-tir-a-relationship-with-the-land/#:~:text=While%20the%20example%20comes%20from,the%20language%20describes%20the%20landscape.>

farewell to Padaí Láidir gives us plenty of examples, the sense of connection to this place has me travelling along in my mind with Padaí Láidir,

'In my mind I could see the coat tails flying from him on the unlighted bicycle - past Glenhull bridge and old Kirke's - past the bridge at Coneyglen, up the hill, rattling down the long run to the bridge at Altacamcosy and along the narrow winding road of dips and hollows into Curraghinalt.' (Pg.92, Tyrone Folk Quest)

The thought of these hills and valleys under threat of air, land and water pollution and community discord really breaks our hearts. We are sad to see people falling out over Dalradian but we feel a sense of responsibility to protect the Sperrins and pass them on as we found them. This is a place worth preserving and these plans will have more than just a negative physical effect on our area they will completely disrupt our 'home' and will leave this place and its spirit changed and disconnected for generations.

## **Tourism**

With the Sperrins Partnership finally being developed after 50 years of the AONB, now is the time to sustainably develop our heritage in this AONB. Research shows that landscapes such as ours couple with history are important attractions.<sup>10</sup>

It must be pointed out that time spent dealing with fighting this unacceptable application takes away from the time we have to develop tourism, develop our heritage investments for our youth club etc.

## **Green Road**

Dalradian have said that the track is known locally as the 'green road' and local tradition has it that this was the route taken by O'Neill to Rathmullan but that no contemporary or historical academic record exist. This mindset of only accepting what is recorded in 'officialdom' or academic sources and disregarding our 'lore' is unacceptable. Has Dalradian checked all Irish language sources? Given that Irish is the oldest written language in Europe, disregarding the body of Irish language sources especially in an area like Greencastle where Irish was so strong would leave a one sided account of history. We believe the Green Rd is of much cultural and societal importance and demand that it is maintained.

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<sup>10</sup> 'Of those planning to visit Ireland, beautiful landscapes and scenery are the main attractor across all markets (34% of those interested in visiting), comparatively of highest importance to Europeans (Germany 46%, France 44%, Italy 39%).

Great culture and rich history are further attractors, important particularly to visitors from the US, Canada and Spain.

...Alice Mansergh, Chief Executive of Tourism Ireland, said: "The sentiment tracker undertaken with RED C highlights strengths that the island of Ireland can play to in order to win visitors – our epic scenery, great culture, history and heritage, and the sense of exploration that we offer."...

<https://www.tourismireland.com/news-and-press-releases/press-releases/article/tourism-ireland-s-latest-research-reveals-what-compels-overseas-visitors-to-choose-the-island-of-ireland>

## Conclusion

We feel that the cultural heritage assessments are insufficient given that they have only taken built heritage into consideration. While we believe our built heritage should be enough to rule out these plans with FODC having highlighted our area in their community development plan as a proposed area of significant archaeological interest. They also acknowledge their role in protecting this interest,

'The richness of our natural heritage, both in terms of landscape, natural environments and biodiversity is recognised in the significant number of international and regionally designated important sites. As custodians of our district, it is our responsibility to protect them for future generations.' Position Paper Five Environmental Assets  
<chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.fermanaghomagh.com/app/uploads/2015/11/Environmental-Assets.pdf>

We have to acknowledge that our area's heritage is more than that, it is one of lore, connection. It may not be measurable in fit to be put on a table but it is undeniable once you give the time to explore it properly.

We ask the commissioners to take heed of what was included in the report against the Doraville wind farm in our area:

"...expressed visceral concerns about how it would fundamentally and unacceptably alter their strong cultural, spiritual and historic connections to their surroundings. The NIRLCA acknowledges local identity and "dinnseanchas" as material considerations. Whilst the landscape must be viewed as a dynamic entity, the scale of this proposal and the magnitude of change that it would affect thereon has the potential to detract from local peoples' sense of place and connection to the land."

In summary this Application must be refused.