

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

Shane  
Óg Mullin

MINE SURVEYOR



**I started working for Dalradian in 2011 as a placement student. From the start the job was interesting, I always felt I was learning new things.**

Last year I finished an MSc in Survey, Land and Environmental Management at the Camborne School of Mines in Exeter. Dalradian funded me for the course (I was cheeky enough to ask their COO for funding in 2016 and he agreed) and now I'm working full-time for the company as a mine surveyor.

No two days are exactly the same, which is one of the things I like best about the job. It's also very exciting to be involved in such a huge project which will provide a new source of jobs for people here. It's badly needed in this part of Tyrone and will change the whole county for the better.

One hugely important point about the arrival of Dalradian in Tyrone is the fact that it has allowed a young person like myself to stay at home, and build a skilled, sustainable long term career which just would not have existed otherwise. Many of my school friends, lads I played football with growing up have had to go to England or Australia to look for work. Most of them would never have found a decent job here.

Hopefully as the mine develops and thrives, hundreds of young people like myself will see their lives transformed as I have. To be able to get training, to have an upward career path, to earn decent money and plan for a future in the place I was born, and never want to leave is something which I hope to see repeated for many others.

Currently a big part of my job is ensuring that the site is working to strict health and environmental standards. On a day-to-day basis that means I test the structural integrity of the underground exploration site. The structural integrity underground is a vital safety factor on site, certain survey measures are carried out to detect any movement. At pre-determined spots I attach stations to the bolts on the "roof" underground. Action would be taken to rectify further movement, as it is essential for future safety purposes. So far there has been no movement!

In terms of the drilling, I provide direction to the drillers to make sure they are drilling into the veins of the mine at the angles which the geologists recommend. The geologists provide 3D models of the underground vein system and as a mine surveyor I carry out final checks on these drill holes.

People probably think of mining as guys with blackened faces with hard hats and torches on, and of course that is a part of mining. But like in most aspects of life today computers and technology play a big part in mining and it is many ways a technologically driven enterprise.

On an ongoing basis I also update the site database with all relevant health and safety information for everybody to see. It's a lot of work, but it's vital for the mine to run smoothly and safely.

At the minute there is no actual mining taking place as we haven't got planning permission yet.

As a mine surveyor that's a bit frustrating, but when we get the go-ahead then my job will expand and that is something I'm really looking forward too.

By that stage there would be a team of mine surveyors working with Dalradian and reporting to the Chief Surveyor. Our job would be to direct the drillers, work according to geology plans, create 3D maps, mark up the areas to be drilled and essentially carry out the works in the most efficient way possible.

Although the mine isn't operational yet, I've had a lot of hands on experience working underground.

Before completing my MSc I worked as a junior underground surveyor. In fact, I was very lucky because at that time Dalradian hired a chief underground surveyor with 45 years' experience in the industry. For me that was an almost once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and is part of what made me want to stay with Dalradian, because it gave me the chance to learn new skills and progress within the company.

Currently a lot of the work that I carry out underground relates to health and safety and to adding to the database.

The fact of being involved in a professionally skilled workforce, removes any doubt or worry. Continually carrying out best practices within this mine-life cycle, provides a certainty of confidence which assures me that the future work will be to an extremely high standard.

Once the mine is operational there will be 350 full-time jobs created in west Tyrone and lots of other businesses and suppliers will benefit from that. That's terrific for the county and as a proud Tyrone man, I'm delighted to be playing my role in that.

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Jobs in Tyrone**