

Q&A

Conroy still hunting for third mine

Conroy Gold chairman Richard Conroy hoping Ireland gold project joins Pogo and Galmoy as success

Both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland are officially gold destinations, thanks to Orion Mining Finance snapping up Dalradian Resources for its Curraghinalt project in the UK section. AIM-listed Conroy Gold has also been plugging away for years and has put together a series of licences on a trend that straddles the border.

The most advanced section, Clontibret, has an indicated and inferred resource of 600,000 ounces of gold and a preliminary economic assessment saying a US\$78 million spend could get Conroy a 35,000oz per annum openpit mine over 11 years.

The most recent drill results from the resource-expansion programme at Clontibret include 2.0m at 7.9 g/t from 38m and 1.6m at 4.8 g/t from 100.4m.

Chairman Richard Conroy, who is on his third mine after Galmoy in Ireland and Pogo in Alaska, is still hunting for a joint venture partner for the project. He spoke to *Mining Journal* in London.

Mining Journal: Do you think London investors are now seeing more value in the high-grade underground options Ireland is offering, even when the focus more recently has been the big 1-2g/t openpit projects in Africa?

Richard Conroy: You now have a situation in the northern half of Ireland where gold is beginning to become quite significant. For many years, Ireland has been an international zinc province. You have the Navan mine, Tara, which is the largest in Europe and probably the fourth largest in the world, we had Galmoy, which we discovered, and Anglo American at Lisheen. At that time, we were supplying about a third of the Western European market and all the major base metals are now in Ireland exploring for zinc. But that's in the limestone regions of the centre south of Ireland.

We're looking for a different sort of geology, orogenic and the thrust slightly to the north of us, you have the Dalradian geology there. Dalradian the company has a world class resource, looking at 6.4 million ounces. They're looking at depth; they go down to 1.2km. We may eventually be doing that ourselves, but at the moment we're down to 200m. You have therefore two mines - they're already at the application stage, we'll be following it up as soon as we can - which will both be world class mines in



Old stomping grounds: Conroy wants a third mine to his credit, after Pogo in Alaska, pictured, and Galmoy in Ireland

gold terms. As well as that, of course, we had a trend which is 40 miles, and there are going to be other discoveries along that.

MJ: How are you finding the financing environment with the drill results you're showing people?

RC: Fortunately we have a good record, we've made a major discovery before with Galmoy and Pogo [gold mine in Alaska].

But we're raising finance for a totally new area, and that's always very challenging but we have been around the track before and what we're looking for is major economic target. It's taken a long time, a huge amount of work by the geologists and the company, but we've now got to the stage where it is reality. We have half a million ounces in our hand as a resource, another eight, nine million ounces is very evident to anyone who cares to look at it.

Now we're in a very changed situation, we're no longer in a grassroots, early-state exploration, we're advanced exploration, or actual development. It's a totally different situation in terms of raising funds and people coming to talk to you.

The logic of the situation will be that we will bring in a major joint venture partner.

MJ: You've compared your trend to the Boulder-Lefroy shear zone around Kalgoorlie. If I was building a mine in that

part of WA with all the right permissions, no one's going to be overly upset if I put in an openpit. How do the locals feel about you coming in with your mine plan in a more populated part of the world?

RC: They're very happy. There are a lot of quarries in the general area, so people are used to that idea. The local reaction to us in the Clontibret area, because they've been hearing about it for long [ask] 'when are you going to get on with it?'.

Ireland is doing fairly well after a bad recession, but the employment tends to be in the urban centres, in Dublin, Cork, Limerick. The governments in Ireland and Northern Ireland are anxious to see regional development and particularly regional development along the border. One of our big targets is in Northern Ireland, Clay Lake.

There's been very considerable support from the authorities and certainly we've had nothing but cooperation and help [from the locals] ... reminds me sometimes of the market over here, saying 'we've heard about it before'.

On the other hand, we had some major visitors, and we had a fellow saying to us 'you guys have done so much in such a short space of time, and on peanuts'.

MJ: What inspired you to put your own name the company?

RC: If you put your own name on the door, you take a lot of responsibility. That's the reality of it ... everyone called Galmoy the Conroy mine.

It's a track record of success, we discovered Galmoy, we discovered Pogo. Pogo is a major gold mine now.

A guy ... called me up one day and said 'are you interested in a project in Alaska?'. I said 'in Alaska?'.

Eventually, very dubiously, we met out in Toronto. It was a period when the major oil companies came into hard rock. Exxon had taken on WGM, a very good consultancy group as a consultant. Exxon, like all the big oil companies ... suddenly all went out again.

What they had done was taken a fairly large stretch in Alaska, and it was a bit like the north of Ireland, people didn't really think of it in terms of gold, and they had said to WGM, 'we're leaving, but you take the whole thing, it's yours now'. And WGM were looking for partners, and they couldn't get any in Canada. They couldn't get any in America. And so [it was] this poor muggins in Ireland.

We ended up bringing in Sumitomo from Japan, who were just beginning to expand. ■

"If you put your own name on the door, you take a lot of responsibility. That's the reality of it"

Minjng Journal

www.mining-journal.com

WORLD

Mazumdar and Cook picking winners 10

OPINION

Analysts too conflicted for honesty 14

AFRICA

The big Indaba preview 17

January 24 - February 7, 2019

A New Year gold mega-merger

Global focus on
Newmont-Goldcorp union

Now Available from



SEG
www.segweb.org

Sponsored by
RioTinto

www.segweb.org/store

Geoscience and Exploration of the Argyle, Bunder, Diavik, and Murowa Diamond Deposits

Editors: Andy T. Davy, Chris B. Smith, Herwart Helmstaedt, and A. Lynton Jaques

