

August 24, 2013

Dear Grammie Dot,

Just a little note to tell you what an amazing time Reto and I recently had in the motherland! We travelled through Ireland this past month, taking in all its beauty and the kindness of strangers. We were so fortunate to have come into very close contact with a wonderful man named Paddy Donagher, who lives in Ballyshannon, Donegal. We were at a pub having a beer one late night after returning from a trip over the bridge to Belleek to look into the Branley side of things, and the bar owner asked the last name of “the roots we were digging up” in the area. He proceeded to tell us that a Donagher owns the café in town and to check in with her in the morning, Well, check in we did and before long she rang up her father, Paddy, and he came to meet us. We quickly established that there is definitely some long lost relation, but to this day he can not figure it out. Paddy had recently started to look deep into his roots, creating a family tree of his own. His “Donagher knowledge” was impressive and before long we were in his car touring through Ballyshannon, visiting William, Alice and William and Bridet Donagher’s gravesite. He couldn’t have been kinder pulling out the weeds to ensure a good photo to share! He shared a lot of the local history spots with us and even took us to his home. Next door we met his daughter Sinead (who ironically married a Rooney) and their 3 lovely children and nieces and nephews.

Throughout the day he had been in touch with some friends of his seeing if someone could get a hold of ole Billy Donagher, our last living relative over there! Paddy had told us that Billy can be “hot or cold” and that just popping in probably wasn’t

the best thing. We weren't expecting to meet Billy, but boy did we get the bonus! Billy came out to meet us and personally took us up to the infamous "House on the Hill"!

It was such a pleasure to meet your long lost cousin Billy (son of William and Bridget I believe). We had quite a few laughs, I'm pretty sure I shocked the hell out of him away with all my hugging!!!

His wife past a few years back and he has since moved from the house on the hill into town. He is about 80 yrs old and sharp as a tack!

We can't wait to share all the stories with you when we are home for the holidays! There is so much more to tell and share, but on this great day I wanted to at least give you some unexpected family connections and share some of these great photos with you.

I tell ya, these guys were great!!!

We were also able to do a little digging on the Branelly side, more info to come!

Love you,
Mer and Reto