



Kilcummin Cemetery, located just outside of town, is Barthly's final resting place, where the relic of a stone chapel can be seen in the background. The oldest grave dates to 1747. (E. O'Brien)



The Church of the Immaculate Conception, the site of Barthly's baptism, was where he remarried upon his return to Oughterard as a widower. Established in 1829, the church was originally known as St. Mary's. After a fire destroyed the original building in 1879, the church was rebuilt between 1932 and 1934. (E. O'Brien)

ANIMAL TALK

By Karen Kalunian

Local Adoptable Loveable



Photo credit: Karen Kalunian

Tortilla

Sometimes animals in shelters are shy and take time to get to know you, that's Tortilla. She is a young mixed breed beauty who will love very deeply but she needs time to build a relationship with you! She does however love other dogs, so a home with another dog friendly dog might be exactly what she needs! If you have lots of love to give and have the patience, Tortilla is waiting for you at Heart of RI 44 Worthington Road Cranston, RI. You can call 401-467-3670 for more information or visit the shelter during their open adoption hours: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 12-2 or Saturday 10-2. If you've been looking to help an animal in need and change a life, please consider Tortilla!

If you have been looking to adopt or know of an animal in need, please contact Karen directly at animaltalk1920@gmail.com



■ Roots

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you an American version." Irish music, I've found, is either very happy, or very sad. So after a very happy song, followed by a very sad one, I floated back to the hotel, imagining the discoveries that awaited me in the morning.

After a breakfast of bracing Irish tea with milk and brown treacle bread, and under a light mist, I headed around the corner towards the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Julie had been right. On the way, there was the little house situated on a corner, partially below the level of the sidewalk, two doors down from Walsh's. Its two front windows, dressed with lace curtains, were obscured by bushes. It had a large chimney adjacent to the next building, and a smaller one towards the center of its shingled roof. Dermot Walsh had remembered it with a thatched roof.

The front door, in a blue almost as bright as the house, had a latch instead of a knob. I stood there for quite some time, picturing the house its former glory, like White O'Morn Cottage in "Quiet Man."

Of course, I eventually knocked. I wasn't planning on it. I began to rehearse what I might say: "Hello, Mr. O'Toole, I'm Erin O'Brien..." I knocked again. "Hi, my name is Erin, and my great-great grandfather Molloy lived in your house." Finally, I walked around to the back of the house. The yard was completely enveloped in morning glory, and enclosed by a cement wall. Maybe Barthly and Mary had a vegetable garden back there; perhaps they cooked over one hearth, and sat together beside the other in the evenings.

The mist cleared as I continued down the street towards the church. I pictured the pen and ink rendering of the original building, as it looked in 1840, to imagine the Molloy family there.

There it was ahead of me, its grey gothic tower looming among the very treetops. Arches beckoned me to pass through them. Behind the church, three tall Celtic crosses in the grass marked the graves of former pastors. I could hear the river rushing beyond the stone wall and the trees as I came nearer.

Lighting a candle

Inside, the church the walls were warm with light, a golden hue. A wedding coordinator was placing the final touches on the pews. As she silently worked, I admired the wood floor, the black and white tile aisle, and the small chandeliers which hung above the stained glass windows, one of St. Patrick. The baptismal font was made of Connemara marble with a wooden lid. I imagined Barthly's parents and godparents, and an old monsignor, in this very spot, that morning in 1863.

A sacristan greeted me and I introduced myself, sharing the reason for my visit. Father Connolly had responded to my email, and suggested I write a 50 to 70 word family history, which he offered to publish in the parish bulletin two Sundays before my arrival. The sacristan had remembered reading it, and retrieved the most recent bulletin, which we scoured for my notice.

She saw me before the candles, and took some coins out of her pocket, placing them in my hand. "For your

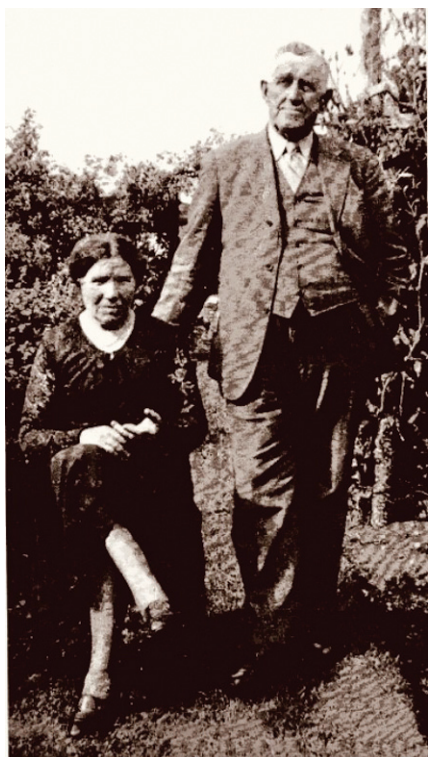
special intention," she nodded. I thanked her, and we said goodbye. Alone in the church, I lit one of the candles in gratitude.

The sun was out, and in front of my hotel I noticed a woman had approached Liam's cab. She carried a metal grocery basket on her arm and was deep in conversation with him.

It was Louise, Liam's wife, who needed a ride home with her perishable groceries. Liam introduced us, and because it was in Ireland, Louise invited me to visit next time I was in Ireland.

Power's Pub, trimmed in red, with its thatch roof and red door, beckoned from across the street. A chalkboard sign outside read, "If passing and you need the loos please feel welcome." In the entrance, Cead Mile Failte ("A Hundred Thousand Welcomes") was painted overhead. Inside, the fireplace mantle was decorated with framed holy cards, a painting of John Wayne in Quiet Man, and a Guinness mirror hung above it.

I was shown to a table by the window. When the waiter heard me speak, he asked where I was from. "Rhode Island," I said, prepared to explain it was near Boston. Then the waiter wanted to know where in Rhode Island. "Warwick," I answered. Of course, our waiter had worked in Boston, and had traveled to Warwick often for work for the May Company department store.



Barthly and his second wife, Mary Roland Molloy, on the occasion of their wedding in 1929, made their home down the street from the church in Oughterard. (Private collection)

Messages from both Jess, the local photographer, and Antoinette, the genealogist, were waiting for me when I returned to the hotel to make tea with the electric kettle in my room. I was to meet them both at the courthouse at 10 o'clock the following morning. Naturally, they were acquainted.

On the road to the courthouse, the river kept me company as it gurgled by. The building turned out to be a former courthouse, now a community space. When I walked in the empty room, I looked up to see a woman waving from the top of a corner staircase. It was Antoinette. Her office was the lone room upstairs, where her computer screen displayed the Oughterard Heritage website. It dawned on me she was the website administrator

who'd contacted me, when Julie answered my query about Barthly Molloy. "Yes," she smiled, "I've brought a lot of people together."

A smiling Jess appeared at the top of the stairs, her arms laden with some of her books. The three of us sat in front of the computer screen, as Antoinette asked for Barthly's birth, death, and marriage dates, which I supplied. Each of us curious to learn where his parents lived in Oughterard, I promised Julie I'd investigate. The Molloy address didn't appear on the baptism documents, but Antoinette said there were some people in town she could talk to, and she'd contact me.

A peaceful resting place

Jess's husband was a Walsh, but Jess wasn't familiar with the Walsh who was Barthly's mother. She asked where I was off to next, and I told her the final stop on my pilgrimage was to Kilcummin Cemetery, to visit Barthly's grave. Since she was traveling in that direction, she offered me a ride. She presented me with her photography books, signing them for me.

A few minutes later, as Jess pulled up alongside the cemetery, another car arrived, parking in front of us. It was Antoinette, who'd decided, "I thought you might need a ride back to the hotel." I was relieved not to be left on my own in an old graveyard to find a headstone.

There was no sign at the entrance to the cemetery, only an opening in the wall. There stood the remaining portion of the derelict chapel, just as Julie had described, the uppermost stones festooned with dried vines, while lichen crept up from the earth.

Antoinette carried her GPS device as we three traversed the undulating grass of the graveyard. Part of her work on the Oughterard Heritage site includes the Kilcummin Cemetery Mapping Project. The earliest gravesite dates to 1747.

We reached Barthly's headstone where the old chapel served as a backdrop. I'd come to the end of my pilgrimage, and wasn't sure if it would be an emotional moment when I stood at Barthly's final resting place. "Hi, Barthly," I smiled, as if to introduce myself. I'd forgotten flowers. A lonely dirt-filled terra-cotta pot was beside the grave where his second wife, Mary, rested beside him. I recalled the end of an Irish blessing: "...and may you die in Ireland."

I had 20 euros left in my wallet. Antoinette promised to pick out a plant or flowers to leave for Barthly the next time she was at the cemetery. When I enclosed the bills in an envelope, I added a note for Barthly, struggling momentarily with what to write. Perhaps I should introduce myself, or mention my mom remembered him, or thank him for the life I've had because he was brave enough to immigrate to the United States. I decided on a simple message: "With affection, Your great-great granddaughter, Erin."

I had not only walked in his footsteps, but found myself fondly attached to his hometown and its inhabitants.

The next day, on the way to the airport in Liam's van, I looked at the lush green fields of cows, and sheep and horses, separated by stones that had been dug out of the land. As I dreamt, I was already planning my return trip.

Liam broke the silence. "Yesterday at the airport I picked up four guys from Rhode Island."

M400	
Family name	Barthly J.
Molloy	Portsmouth
Address	Supreme-Portsmouth, N.H.
Certificate no. (or vol. and page)	Year 1895-29
Country of birth or allegiance	Ireland
Date and part of arrival in U. S.	May 1, 1883
When born (or age)	January 22, 1895
Date of naturalization	January 22, 1895
Name and address of witnesses	John G. Jellison
Thomas Jones	
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, Immigration Service. FORM N-88 (Old 147) 16-17008	



Bartholomew Joseph "Barthly" Molloy, in the traditional flat cap, appears in an undated studio photograph. (Private collection)

Barthly left his home in Ireland at age 20, securing this United States immigration and naturalization card record. (Ancestry.com)



Annie Connelly Molloy is breathtaking on her wedding day in 1886. (Private collection)