

Norwegian envoy marks the kindness of strangers

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THE FIRST Norwegian student to study at Mary Immaculate College met had a special meeting with one of her native citizens last week – the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway, Truls Hanevold.

Norwegian student Hanne Mari Halvorsen, who is in her third year of a degree course in Early Childcare and Education, met the Norwegian Ambassador during the first ever festival to commemorate and celebrate the links between Limerick and Norway.

In April 1868 the Hannah Parr ship set sail from Oslo to Canada with 380 passengers on board, but two weeks later ran into difficulty and docked in Limerick for six weeks while repairs were being carried out.

Ambassador Hanevold said the visit to the Mid-West “provided a unique opportunity for both Limerick and Norway to enhance links between both communities and to develop additional opportunities”.

He remarked on the similarities between Ireland and Norway from an historical and economic point of view, but warned that with wealth comes many challenges in the social, education and economic sector.

During his visit to Limerick last weekend, the Norwegian Ambassador laid a wreath at St Mary's Cathedral in memory of the four Norwegian children who died in Limerick that year. He also met with President of Mary Immaculate College, Professor Peadar Cremin discuss



Norwegian Ambassador Truls Hanevold paid a special visit to Mary Immaculate College this week as part of the 140th anniversary of the famous journey of the Hannah Parr. Pictured from left are Mary I President, Prof Peadar Cremin; Norwegian student, Hanne Mari Halvorsen; Ambassador Hanevold and his wife Leena Huso-Hanevold

PICTURE: BRIAN GAVIN/PRESS 22

the educational links between Norway and Limerick.

Prof Cremin said he has long been an admirer of the extent to which Norway has provided leadership in the field of sustainable development and environmental education.

“Both Ireland and Norway show a deep commitment to building a better world for all in the future.

The field of Adult Education and Distance Education are two areas in which this college has a

particular interest and I look forward to sharing and comparing our practices with colleagues in Norway,” said Prof Cremin.

Ambassador Hanevold went on to applaud Ireland in its achievements in the education sector and welcomed the opportunity to discuss these matters further with Prof Cremin.

Speaking on emigration, Prof Cremin remarked that Irish people can acutely understand the difficulties in building a new life away from home and integrating

into a new community, given their own experience of emigration.

“In a Europe which now attracts large numbers of immigrants there are challenges to be faced by our society in the way we welcome refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants who hope to build a better life in our countries and in Europe.

Education and most especially primary teachers, such as those who leave this college every year, have a key role to

play in addressing these challenges.

In our commitment to social inclusion this college continues to ‘make a difference’ by supporting ethnic minorities and members of disadvantaged communities especially those on our doorstep” stated Prof Cremin.

He went on to say that the two countries have a lot to learn from each other as both Ireland and Norway are now grappling with new educational challenges.