

Norwegian Ambassador Truls Hanevold, second left, with, from left, Martin Bourke, chairman, Limerick Civic Trust; Dean Maurice Sirr; Bishop Trevor Williams and Mayor John Gilligan as a plaque in remembrance of the Hannah Parr events of 1868 was unveiled

PICTURES: OWEN SOUTH

Hannah Parr events remembered in city

By JOHN HOGAN

A PLAQUE commemorating the deaths of three Norwegian children and the generosity shown by the people of Limerick to passengers on the Norwegian emigrant ship, Hannah Parr, was unveiled at St Munchin's Graveyard this Monday.

Having lost a foremast on the way from Norway to Canada, the Hannah Parr was forced to stop here in 1868 for repairs, leaving its 370 passengers to rely on the charity of the people of Limerick.

Norwegian Ambassador to Ireland, Truls

Hanevold, was joined by members of Limerick Civic Trust at the Bishop's Palace on Monday to discuss his countrymen's unscheduled six-week stay in Limerick.

"They must have been so worried coming in here and then so overjoyed to receive the welcome they did. I'm sure they would have met many people who had family members that had already left for America and may have intended on emigrating themselves," said Mr Hanevold.

"I know that the memory of the generosity shown to the passengers has been kept alive in Quebec and the places further afield in which

the passengers of the Hannah Parr settled down. I am glad that this is one of my final functions before I retire from my international duties in six weeks time," the ambassador told the audience which also included Mayor John Gilligan, Bishop Trevor Williams and Dean Maurice Sirr.

In his speech to the audience, Martin Bourke, chairman of Limerick Civic Trust, quoted a note written by the captain of the Hannah Parr for the people of Limerick before the ship's departure.

"It is about short time ready for again to try the Atlantic Ocean, and we will pray to God that the

ocean will meet us with more friendship than that time we last were its guests."

"Before we, meanwhile, leave this city and its exceedingly friendly population, it is our wish to express our hearty thanks for all the kindness the ladies and gentlemen of Limerick have shown us," read the note.

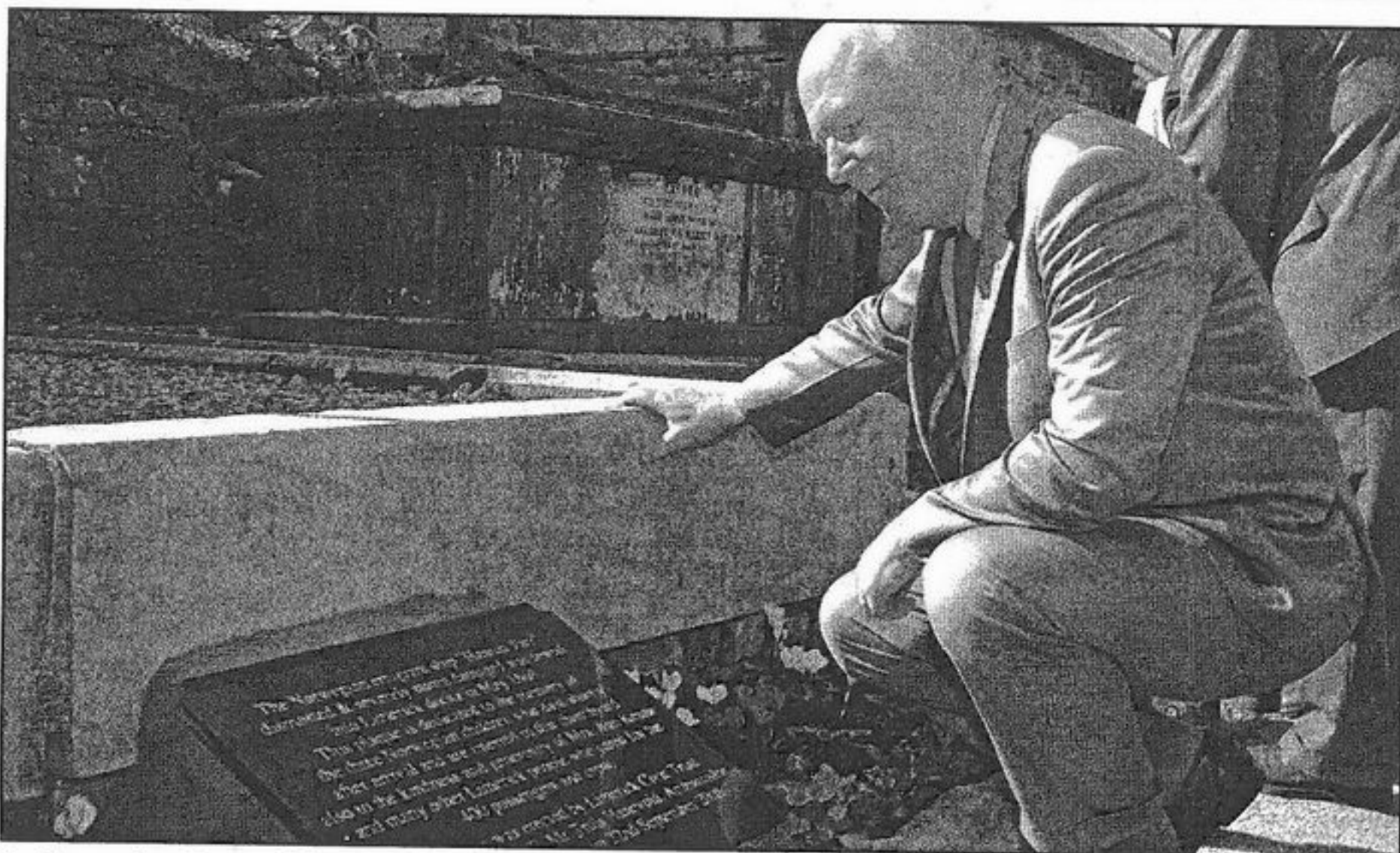
Mr Bourke said yesterday's event combined deep sadness, warm generosity and the great triumph of the Norwegian emigrants in finally reaching the gateway to the New World in 1868.

The plaque is situated at the Kears family plot in St Munchin's Graveyard as there is uncer-

tainty as to the exact location of the children's graves.

City woman Anne Kears was instrumental in mobilising the people of Limerick to help the unexpected Norwe-

gian visitors. Her efforts are evidenced by letters she wrote to the Limerick Chronicle at the time asking for contributions of food, clothes and money to help the stranded emigrants.



Ambassador Hanevold at the unveiling of the memorial to the three Norwegian children in the grounds of St Munchin's Church

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