

# Hannah Parr memorial plaque is erected in St Munchins cemetery

**John Hogan**

A PLAQUE commemorating the deaths of three Norwegian children and the generosity shown by the people of Limerick to passengers on board 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 divert to Limerick in 1868 for repairs, leaving its 370 passengers to rely on the charity of the people of the city.

The Norwegian ambassador to Ireland, Truls Hanevold, was joined by members of Limerick Civic Trust at the Bishop's Palace this Monday where the plaque was formally unveiled.

"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," the ambassador told the audience which also included Mayor John Gilligan, Bishop Trevor Williams and Dean Maurice Sirr.

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

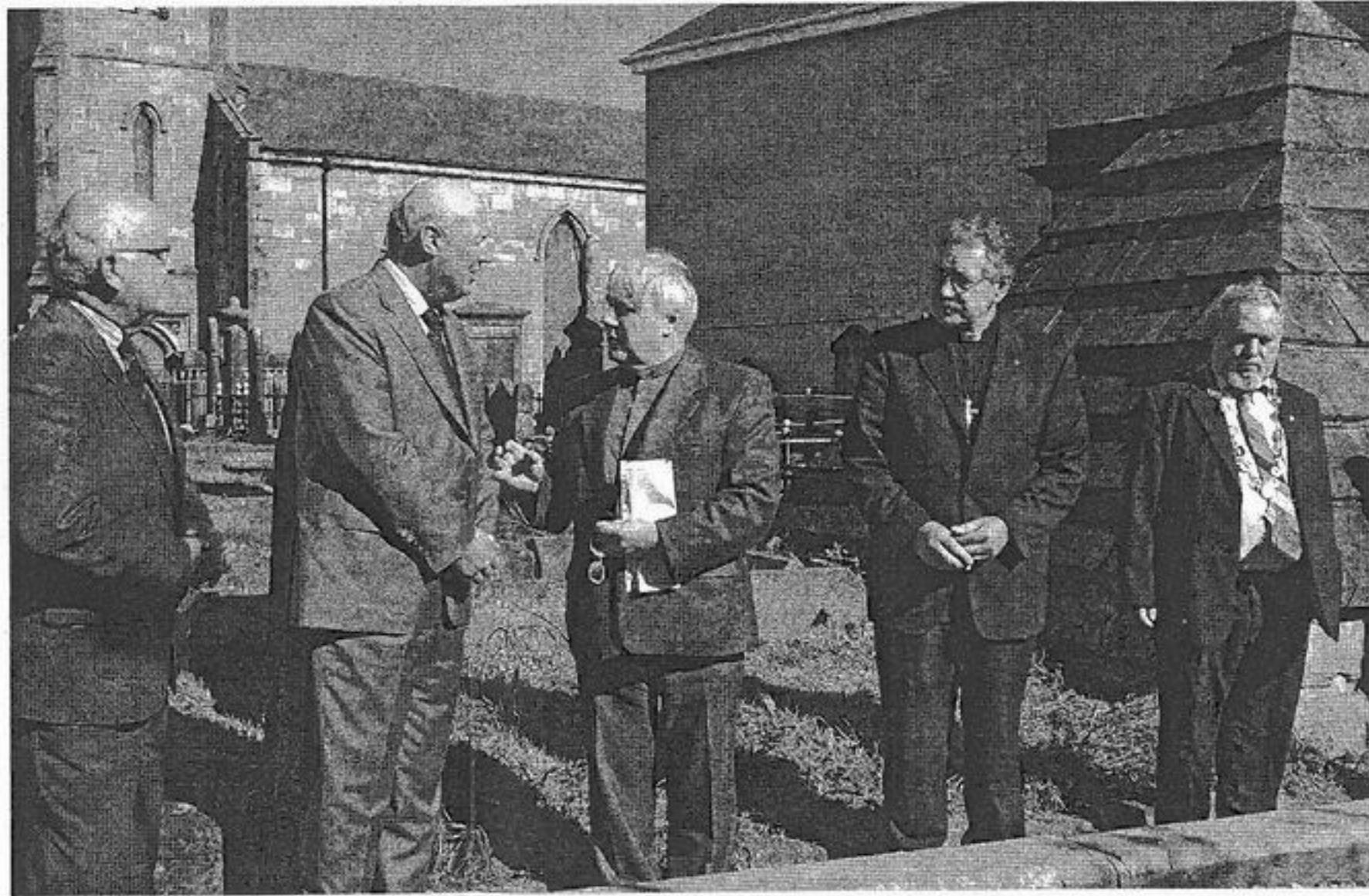
friendly population, it is our wish to express our hearty thanks for all the kindness the ladies and gentlemen of Limerick have shown us," read the note.

Mr Bourke said the 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 at the Kears family plot in St Munchin's Graveyard as there is uncertainty 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 Norwegian 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 passengers.



Truls Hanevold, the Norwegian Ambassador to Ireland, second from left, at the unveiling of a plaque to the children of the Hannah Parr in St Munchins Church of Ireland graveyard. Looking on are Martin Bourke, chairman of Limerick Civic Trust, Dean Maurice Sirr, Bishop Trevor Williams and Mayor John Gilligan

PICTURE: OWEN SOUTH