

# Carving for garden adds strength to Kiwi link

A LINK with the other side of the world has been re-dedicated in Harrogate's Valley Gardens.

A large crowd gathered to watch as the traditional Maori pou whenua was added to the New Zealand Garden.

It was blessed by Maori visitors, in front of guests including the Mayor and Mayoress of Harrogate, Coun Bill Houlst and his wife Vanessa, the High Sheriff of West Yorkshire Richard Clough and Simon Mackaness, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire. Representatives of the Golden Oldies Cricket festival, including Sir Thomas Ingilby, were also present.

They enjoyed music from Stray Notes and SPARK, who performed God Save the Queen and God Defend New Zealand E Ihowa Atua.

Coun Ray Ahipene-Mercer, from Harrogate's sister city of Wellington, New Zealand – only the second Maori councillor to be elected in the city in



**Maori Elder Sam Jackson speaks at the blessing of the New Zealand garden in Valley Gardens. (100812GS2b)**

the past 100 years – spoke of the strong bonds of friendship between the two communities.

He said: "We are honoured to be part of the dedication of this pou whenua, made by prominent carver Mr Rangi Hetet for Wellington, and now gifted to Harrogate's New Zealand Garden."

The relationship with

Wellington was formally recognised when it was made Harrogate's sister city in 1978. But the link goes back further than that to the Second World War, with 23 New Zealand airmen now buried in Harrogate – a fact which Coun Ahipene-Mercer said would never be forgotten.

He added: "At every council

meeting we have in Wellington we are reminded of our relationship, as the beautiful ceremonial mace gifted to us by Harrogate is still carried at the start of every meeting and for other ceremonial occasions.

"We are delighted you have accepted the pou for your New Zealand Garden safely delivered courtesy of Air New Zealand. I believe a garden is the perfect symbol to celebrate the friendship and bonds between our two cities and countries. A garden will continue to grow in new directions, change with the seasons and reflect life itself. A garden is alive and vital, full of promise for the future – as our friendship is."

Blessing the new gift, Mauri kaumatua (elder) Sam Jackson said: "In New Zealand, the pou represents the relationship between the tangata whenua (people of the land) and their ancestors and the environment. I am so pleased to see our pou here in this



**Mia Bramley and Miranda Lascelles sit on a sculpture in the New Zealand garden in the Valley Gardens. (100812GS2a)**

beautiful setting, in this small piece of New Zealand on the other side of the world, representing the relationship between our tangata whenua and your place in this world."

The trip to Harrogate also offered the visitors a chance to see the War Graves Commission area of Stonefall Cemetery, where Sam per-

formed a blessing on the young airmen buried there.

Following the visit, Harrogate Borough Council paid tribute to Kenneth Broadwith, who died in 2009. The

Harrogate-born man left a substantial bequest for work to be carried out in the Valley Gardens, which were special to him and his family.