

## Welcome Pole completed

Since the Seattle garden, Halswell Quarry, was first planned it had been hoped to complement Doug Neil's stone seating arrangement with a totem pole, typical of the Seattle region. The committee was fortunate to gain the interest of Seattle Carver Jay Haavik, a personal friend of Doug Neil's, in this work. Jay designed the totem as a 'Welcome Pole' to the city of Christchurch, carved in the Haida style of the native peoples of Queen Charlotte Islands, off the coast of British Columbia, Canada.

Jay Haavik has been a professional carver for more than 30 years and specialises in styles from North West Native American art and Viking art. He agreed not only to travel to Christchurch to carve the pole, but also to provide a four metre Western Red Cedar log to ensure authenticity. This large and heavy object was freighted to Christchurch by Air New Zealand, free of cost - a huge and much appreciated contribution to the project.

On top of the pole that has been gifted to Christchurch is a human face with its hands in a welcome gesture between the ears of the next figure, an eagle. The eagle is a symbol of greeting and hospitality. The eagle's claws are clutching the head of a bear, which has its tongue outstretched. In the claws of the bear is a salmon, a symbol of the marine and fishing connections between Christchurch and Seattle.

Jay said "totem poles are without a doubt the most visible and striking symbol of the native peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast of North America. They often tell family stories, remember a dead elder, or welcome guests. Totem poles have amazed visitors to the northwest coast for generations."

The final carving took place in March, at the Arts Centre of Christchurch, which provided a covered space in the south quad. As Artist in Residence, Jay said that visitor comments and queries, apart from their interest in the work and its meaning for Christchurch, often centred on the strong, pleasant and characteristic smell of the newly carved cedar.

In unveiling the totem pole on 23 April 2004, Christchurch Mayor Garry Moore emphasised the city's appreciation and respect for its sister cities across the world, and for the way in which this work symbolises the welcome Christchurch offers to all.

The Welcome Pole will be displayed in several Christchurch venues before it is installed and dedicated in the Seattle Sister City Garden. Plantings of regional species such as Red Alder, Salal, Kinnikinnick, and the Western Red Cedar from which the pole is carved will provide an authentic background to the work' visitors will be able to imagine the pole in its homeland.

## The creation of the Welcome Pole

1. the log being delivered to carver Jay Harvik's home, Seattle.



2 Under cover in the South Quad of the Arts Centre



3. Jay carving the log at the Arts Centre, Christchurch



4. The unveiling of the totem 23 April 2004



5. Mayor Garry Moore speaking at the unveiling



6. Jay Harvik talking about his work at the unveiling



7. Mayor Garry Moore, Brian Palliser, Chair of Christchurch-Seattle Sister City Committee, Jay Harvik, the carver from Seattle, Doug Neil, ex Seattle Christchurch sculptor.

