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photo opportunity – see below

GOLDEN GONG GETS PLANTED ON FIRST DAY OF SPRING

HAVING taken gold in last year's Entente Florale, Harrogate's gardeners thought they had seen the last of the special plantings for this prestigious Europe in Bloom event. But as they get prepared for this year's normal spring plantings, they have been asked to plant one more thing - the gold award itself. This is a heavy gold tablet which the council and Harrogate in Bloom have decided should take pride of place in one of the town's most popular flowerbeds – opposite Betty's café – and they have chosen the first day of spring for the ceremony.

As the council and Harrogate in Bloom start to cash in on this victory to entice more visitors to the area this spring and summer, they have invited the newly appointed Chairman of the Yorkshire Tourist Board to unveil it.

Judith Donovan CBE was appointed Chairman of Yorkshire's multi-billion pound tourism industry in January. She is a Millennium and Health and Safety Commissioner and a former Trustee for the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. She is also chairman of the Northern Region of Postwatch and a Director of the Northern Ballet Theatre.

Councillor Pat Jones, Cabinet Member for Leisure, thinks Judith who lives in Ripon is just the right person to carry out this final Entente Florale photo call. She said: "We know everyone at the YTB is excited about Judith's appointment and we are extremely grateful to her for allowing us this early opportunity to show her a little bit of Harrogate and what we have to offer tourists. And as chair of the YTB and a former Yorkshire Woman of the Year we certainly think we can rely on her to spread the word about the wonders of Yorkshire."

PHOTO CALL: The Mayor of the Borough of Harrogate (Councillor Margaret-Ann de Coursey-Bayley) along with members of Harrogate in Bloom will invite Judith Donovan CBE, Chairman of Yorkshire Tourist Board, to unveil the planted plaque on 21 March at 10.00 am opposite Betty's café, Harrogate.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Harrogate and Darley both took gold in the 2004 Entente Florale (Europe in Bloom) and Harrogate's horticultural charity Horticap made it a hat-trick by being awarded the Lucija Cikes special award for 'Therapy through Horticulture'.

Entente Florale is a prestigious European competition similar to Britain in Bloom. The overall aim of the competition is the improvement of the quality of life for local urban and village communities.