

# Geese management rewarded by US company



High-flyers – David Feld, US Geesepeace program director, presents Coun Maureen Beckett with a top award, watched by US Geesepeace members Holly Hazard, Brian Preist, Ali Scruby, Lyn Scruby and John Leedham. 46.05.032JB

US company Geesepeace has rewarded Stratford's Town Management Partnership for its model approach to the 2005 geese management campaign.

The partnership was the first group to organise a GeesePeace programme in the UK to humanely and efficiently flush Canada Geese from areas where they were creating a nuisance.

And bosses at US based group GeesePeace were so impressed with its adoption of the programme, they decided to honour the partnership at a special reception at the Alveston Manor Hotel on Tuesday (November 15).

The GeesePeace programme uses three strategies to accom-

plish its goals. The first, egg oiling, reduces the numbers of geese throughout the area. The second, site aversion, sees geese repeatedly chased out of town in a bid to get them to set up home elsewhere and the third strategy, public education, uses signage and brochures to educate the public that feeding wildlife harms, not helps them.

Resident Canada Geese are apparently a growing problem in the UK – they were brought here by King Charles II and, unlike their native cousins in North America, are unable to migrate.

In Stratford they are blamed for causing excessive mess and for chasing off the town's resident swans.

# River man verdict is accidental death

A YOUNG man battling depression after the death of his older brother tragically died after slipping into a river and suffering an instant heart attack, an inquest heard this week.

Matthew Hawkins, 23, from Parsons Close, Shipston, was coming to terms with the death of his brother Paul and struggling with a drug and alcohol dependency when his body was spotted in the River Stour near the Old Mill Hotel in Mill Street at 10am on August 4.

The inquest, held at Leamington Town Hall on Wednesday (November 16), heard how the young man had seemed quiet the previous day as he met with his

girlfriend, visited the doctors and spent some time drinking at a friends house. Later in the evening CCTV footage then showed him staggering through town and witnesses saw him wandering across the bridge in Mill Street.

Paramedics recovered his body the next day and the police recovered his passport, some anti-depressant pills, a bicycle and fishing rods from the scene. Officers told the inquest several wounds were found on the body but added they found nothing suspicious about his death.

A keen fisherman, Mr Hawkins was prescribed tranquillisers and anti-depressants and was described as having 'good

and bad days' after his brother died on April 13 of acute alcohol poisoning.

A pathologist report revealed it was most likely Mr Hawkins had slipped into the river after drinking heavily, been unable to pull himself out, and had suffered an instant heart attack after being immersed in cold water.

Warwickshire Coroner Michael Coker recorded a verdict of accidental death

and explained the only thing they knew for sure was that Mr Hawkins was found in the river by two brothers some period after having suffered a vast shock to his system, by which time it was too late for his recovery.

"There is no evidence to suggest that anything untoward happened. His alcohol levels were high which obviously resulted in some impairment of his judgement," he added.

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