

Swans: Let there be water

The Swans sculpture by Lorne McKeane has returned to Swan Walk but on a temporary plinth without the water which was an integral feature.

The Manager of Swan Walk suggested that there was a danger of Legionnaires' Disease (*Legionella pneumophila*) from the water droplets (aerosols) associated with the water feature. *Legionella* is a commonly occurring bacterium which only rarely causes problems. Reference to the Health & Safety Executive website on the subject, www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/ indicates that any danger arises only when the water temperature is between 20°C (68°F) and 45°C (113°F) when the bacterium multiplies rapidly if it also has a source of nutrition. The normal temperature of mains cold water is less than 20°C but the water for the Swans feature is recycled to minimise losses and the Manager of Swan Walk claimed that it gets hot. She has not said what the temperature actually was before the water effect was stopped at the time the swans were removed.

But all is not lost! The temperature of the recirculating water can be kept below 20°C by a relatively simple cooling arrangement. *Legionella* can also be controlled chemically. One of the endearing features of the water effect was the joy it gave to young children. It is, therefore, important that any chemical treatment is not toxic to humans. Chlorination is effective against *Legionella* but dosing needs to be carefully controlled to avoid it, too, being a hazard. There have been a few, well publicised, accidents from the misuse of chlorination techniques at swimming pools.

An alternative to chlorination is Ultra-Violet (UV) light irradiation. This would involve a simple addition to the recirculation water pump system. A domestic pool system costs about £500 plus an annual lamp change for £50. Otherwise, this technique is relatively maintenance-free. This would probably be more than enough for the Swans feature. A UV installation would kill both the *Legionella* and any algae on which it might feed. As Aviva, the group which operates Swan Walk, made profits of £1.4 billion last year it would be very small beer for them to restore the Swans to their full former glory complete with whatever precautions are necessary against any health risks, real or imaginary. They told us that the swans would be back but to deny us the water feature which was an integral part of the sculpture is a serious breach of faith.

As was shown last year, Lorne McKeane's Swans have really captured the hearts of the people of Horsham. They need to be displayed as the artist intended. She caught the motion of the Swans in flight and the movement of the water is needed to complete this dynamic picture. The sculpture is a valuable attraction in the Swan Walk shopping centre and if the shops want the custom, the management need to take every action to make the centre a pleasant place to shop. The Swans, complete with water, are a vital centrepiece.

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