

Press Release 10 September 2007

Cross-Channel swimmer swims for Radley Lakes

Celebrating his recent Channel swim, Angus McChesney swam a 1 kilometre stretch of the River Thames through Abingdon, on Sunday, to support the cause of Save Radley Lakes who are trying to prevent the destruction of a cherished local lake by RWE npower, operators of the nearby Didcot 'A' Power Station. The event gave out the unmistakable message that the Power Company's behaviour in this matter is unacceptable, and their customers should show this by switching to another supplier.

Protected by a flotilla of 3 boats, a kayak, a catamaran and a dory, decked with bunting and placards, and to the sound of cheering and (Swedish) foghorns, local cross-channel swimmer, Angus McChesney, completed the 1km course from Abingdon Lock to St Helen's Wharf, just beyond the confluence with the Ock, in just 20 minutes. This was faster than anyone was able to follow on foot. On board one of the boats was the Save Radley Lakes Water Vole, complete with life-jacket. (Health and Safety dictates that even water voles, despite being excellent swimmers, are required to wear these!). The event finally ended with a well earned drink at The Anchor Inn.

Reflecting on Angus' impressive cross-channel swim, in which he collected over £40,000 for a leukaemia charity, Mayor of Abingdon, Councillor Lorraine Oates, who presented Angus with a bottle of champagne afterwards, said

“I think it is very important that Angus is defending Radley Lakes. Everybody can see how much the lakes mean to local people.”

Indeed this was borne out by the appearance of no fewer than six local councillors to cheer Angus on his way. Also, the people on each bank donated generously towards the Save Radley Lakes legal fund, and the three boats, crews and other assistance were kindly provided by local people and groups, including Abingdon School Rowing Club and Abingdon's Abbey Sailing Club.

Noting the shadowy form of Didcot power station looming in the distance, at the finish of his swim, Angus reminded us how its management has been very successful with ash recycling, even recycling more than they produced last year.

“The thing I want to persuade everyone is that it is no longer acceptable to throw recyclable ash into a lake,”

said Mr McChesney,

“If RWE ruin this much loved wildlife resource during the last few years of Didcot A, risking flooding, they will be doing something which no other major power company in this country finds acceptable. RWE will lose face when their competitors, including Scottish Power, Drax and E.ON have policies to avoid such waste.”

Save Radley lakes claims that recycling ash at Didcot could save up to 250,000 tonnes of CO₂ each year, but not if they throw it in the lake.



Angus McChesney with Town Mayor, Lorraine Oates, before the swim. (Photograph by Lynda Pasquire)

Save Radley Lakes Chairman, Basil Crowley, said

“We are delighted that such an accomplished sportsman as Angus McChesney should offer his support to our campaign. We are grateful to him for giving his time and energy to draw attention to NPower’s plans, which the majority of the community view with disgust.”

Save Radley Lakes supporters went on to join in with the Fun in the Park event where a stall managed to raise some further funds to support the Town Green legal costs.



Angus McChesney swimming the Thames at Abingdon, 9 September 2007. (Photograph by Basil Crowley)



The protection flotilla following the swim. (Photograph by Basil Crowley)

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