

Press Release 17 September 2007

Cycle to Recycle Protest

On Saturday, cyclists from all over Oxfordshire joined in a protest rally to show support for the Save Radley Lakes campaign and to protest about RWE npower's plans to destroy Thrupp Lake at Radley by turning it into a dump for pulverised fuel ash from Didcot A Power Station. The protest comes on the eve of npower commencing works on the site on Monday.



Protestors gathering outside Radley Railway Station on Saturday 15 Sept. Photograph by Basil Crowley

Cyclists came from as far afield as Oxford, Witney and Bicester to assemble at Radley before riding to the threatened lake. Some people came dressed as frogs and one prominent member of Save Radley Lakes came with her bike bedecked with balloons and with a large sign emblazoned with the words "Switch from npower", a message that was repeated on the apparel of many of the participants. The protest then rode the Sustrans cycleway from Radley to Abingdon. The route passed by npower's "fortress Sandles", once a family home on the northern edge of Thrupp Lake, and continued along the shore of the lake. In glorious sunshine and under the watchful eye of a circling Peregrine Falcon - one of the many protected species that inhabit the area - the contingent paused to take in the views across the lake and wonder upon the folly of the commercial imperatives that threaten the destruction of such a beautiful place.

The cycle protest ended in Abingdon Town Square, where the riders were greeted by the Save Radley Lakes Water Vole. The Water Vole, a renowned swimmer, has not yet mastered the art of cycling, but, unlike RWE npower, is known to be a great recycler of everything possible.



Jo Cartmell leading the ride along the Sustrans cycleway near the lakes.
Photograph by Basil Crowley

Roger Thomas, a member of Save Radley Lakes, addressed the throng saying

“The message we are trying to get across today is about recycling. We are all being urged to recycle our waste and we are all trying to do our bit. Big business like RWE npower should do the same. It is quite unacceptable that they should be wanting to dump their waste ash into a beautiful lake. The ash is a valuable resource and should be recycled into building materials.”

Jo Cartmell, one of the event’s organisers said

“RWE npower’s plan to destroy our beautiful Thrupp Lake is totally unnecessary, when the ash they are throwing away is so useful. I cannot understand why they cannot continue to recycle all of the ash, as they claim they did last year, especially as the power station will only run for another 8 years at most. The communities of Abingdon and Radley are now in their third year of campaigning. Communities do not campaign so long or so hard unless they care deeply about something. This is about preserving cherished areas of our countryside both for the wildlife they support and the people who enjoy them.”

Campaigners say that Npower should behave ethically and should at least wait until the Town Green Inspector, Vivian Chapman QC, has delivered his verdict on the Town Green status of the Lakes, before starting any work. This ruling, which many hope will save them, is expected any day.

The event was jointly organised by Andy Boddington of CPRE and Jo Cartmell of Save Radley Lakes who say that tranquil areas like Thrupp Lake are disappearing fast and there is a need to preserve those that remain. One only has to compare the 1960’s and 2007 tranquillity maps on CPRE’s website http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/campaigns/character/tranquillity/tranquillity/zones_of_intrusion.htm to appreciate just how vital these tranquil spaces have become.



Switch from Npower. The message being delivered in Abingdon Town Square afterwards. Photographs by Basil Crowley

FUTURE EVENTS

A 10K Fun Run has been organized as a fundraiser for Save Radley Lakes legal fees on Sunday 23rd September, starting at 10:30 am. If you are not able to take part but are able to donate, please visit saveradleylakes.org.uk.

For further information contact:

Jo Cartmell on 01235 534424;

or

Marjorie White on 01235 216428 or 01235 530174,

or visit www.saveradleylakes.org.uk or the news pages at www.radleyvillage.org.uk .