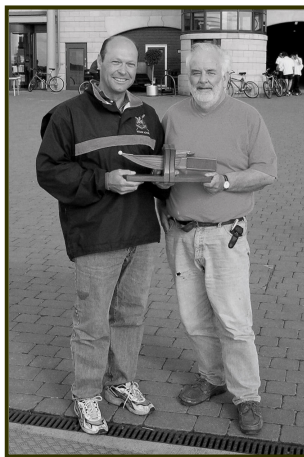


## Michael Righton: Our Quiet Hero

**Queens Commendation for Bravery for his actions in rescuing a man trapped in an excavator that was submerged in a lake.**

Michael has lived for 2 years in Plum Lane, Shipton. His Citation reads: "On 4<sup>th</sup> December 2002 at about 1600 hours, Michael Righton, a rowing coach and teacher at the Dragon School in Oxford, was supervising a group of children on Dorney Rowing Lake, Eton, Berkshire. An excavator was clearing a flat area at the edge of the lake, when a platform it was on gave way, and it slipped into the water, totally submerging the cab and driver. Mr Righton instructed his boat crew not to move, sprinted 60 metres, waited a moment to see if the driver emerged and when he did not, alerted the lake reception on his mobile phone. Realising that help would be some minutes he plunged into the very cold water and swam out to the



Michael with Eddie

submerged vehicle and climbed onto its roof. He tried to open the emergency hatch and to smash the windows, both unsuccessfully. He saw a lorry and shouted to the driver to throw him something that would break the windscreen. The driver threw him a hammer which Mr Righton caught and then used to break the window. Now able to reach inside he managed to pull the 17 stone driver free from the cab. He thought that the man was dead but he shouted for assistance and a construction worker swam out to help him. Mr Righton administered mouth to mouth resuscitation and the driver started to breathe again. The emergency services then arrived and the two men hauled the driver into the rescue launch".

### Talking to Michael

"It was strange. My job is sports training at school, what's the point if you don't use it when it matters? The sort of thing I would do anyway. I felt an absolute idiot swimming in December, but logic said if I don't he will be dead. I was determined to get him out. Initially he seemed a dead man, but I kept going with cardiac massage on the roof of the digger. My ankles were in water and he kept slipping off. I held him by the scruff of his neck and thumped him a few times on the chest and eventually he started to breathe again".

*Eddie recovered fully and continues to work at Dorney Lake. Since then Michael has met Eddie, several times, both are humbled by the experience they shared. Michael is delighted that he and twelve 13 year olds from the Dragon School have just successfully rowed 50 kilometres from Lechlade to Oxford to raise £1,000 for the Chiltern Air Ambulance. BBC Oxford will feature him on TV between 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> August.*