

## RSC North West Analytical Division promote Streamwatch at Manchester Science Festival 2013



As described by Peter Doyle in the March 2013 issue of NW Chemistry News, the award of a grant from the RSC International Year of Chemistry (IYC) Challenge plus additional funds from NW Region Analytical Division (NWAD) has enabled NWAD to purchase a number of *Streamwatch* kits: simple analytical test kits which can be taken into the field to measure various parameters and thus provide information on the health of local streams and ponds. The purpose of the Streamwatch project is to encourage involvement in chemical analysis and promote scientific inquiry.

Members of the general public, especially younger members, were given the opportunity to carry out the tests during a day of events called 'Brains of the Future' run by Manchester Metropolitan University on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October - part of Manchester Science Festival 2013. The Streamwatch event was run entirely by MMU BSc MChem Chemistry students Harjeet Singh, Joseph Yuen, Oliver Steele, Hollie Bird and David Shaw. The students produced Streamwatch kit information leaflets, bookmarks and participation certificates to generate interest and to advertise that the test kits are available on loan (free of charge) to schools, community groups and other organisations in the region. On the day they led the 'junior analysts' through the measurement of pH, hardness, nitrates and dissolved oxygen on samples from Rochdale Canal and the River Medlock – parents thoroughly enjoyed watching their children taking part and lots of smart phones were used to record the involvement. Joseph and Oliver acted out the roles of scientist and farmer as a way

of explaining the significance of the measurements - very entertaining and informative and attracting quite a crowd.

The Chemistry students undertook the Streamwatch project to gain points towards the silver award of a university initiative called MMU Futures which gives recognition for all voluntary extra-curricular activities: an incentive to encourage students to look beyond the limits of their course of study and broaden their skills and experience. The students intend to take the kits out to schools and community groups and to contact relevant agencies like United Utilities and the Environmental Agency to have them lend their support to the activities. The intention is to collate and publish the results obtained by participants.

If you know of a group who would like to borrow one of the kits then, for further details, go to:

<http://www.nwad.org/new.background.streamwatch.html>

*Megan McLean*

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