

Manchester Balloon Launch

A helium-filled weather balloon will be launched from Heaton Park Hall, North Manchester on Saturday 8th October at 12 noon. (For a map please see the link at the bottom of the press release). The balloon will carry a camera recording video of the ascent to the edge of space, capturing images of the Earth's curvature. Scientific measurements of pressure, temperature and winds will also be recorded. The equipment is set to experience temperatures dropping as cold as -60°C, pressures as low as 10 mb as the balloon travels to heights of 30 km, at 5 m/s. The organisers have had to wait for the weather conditions to be just right for the launch.

Project Scientist Dr. Grant Allen from the Centre of Atmospheric Science, University of Manchester said: "Being able to predict the trajectory or flight path of things in the atmosphere is incredibly important. It lets us predict which way a volcanic ash cloud will travel, or how soon the fall-out from a chemical or nuclear accident will reach a town. In the case our balloon launch, we need to make sure that it will come down to earth on land, and not too far away from Manchester! The winds in the upper atmosphere blow at anything up to 50m/s, so we need to get this right."

Visitors to the park will be able to participate in their own balloon race and in a competition to predict exactly where the balloon will land, as well as various other fun weather and climate related activities. There will also be numerous weather and climate scientists to hand to answer questions about the launch.

Dr. Sylvia Knight, Head of Education for the Royal Meteorological Society said that "balloon launches like this have really captured the public imagination. They are a fantastic way to learn about the Earth's atmosphere, and we will make sure that the data collected by the balloon, as well as the video footage of its ascent, will be published to the Society website." The project scientists will also write up how the weather conditions for the launch and flight path of the balloon were predicted. A team from the University of Manchester will "chase" the balloon after launch to recover the camera and data it has collected.

Contact information For more information contact Dr. Grant Allen (University of Manchester and Chair-North West Centre of RMets) – grant.allen@manchester.ac.uk – 0161 3063911 For more information about the Royal Meteorological Society contact Rachael Fordham (Public Engagement Manager) rachael.fordham@rmets.org -0118 956 8500 Location information Launch location: [In front of Heaton Park Hall](#)

Heaton Park is accessible by tram from Manchester City Centre (the Heaton Park stop) and easily accessible from the M60 ring road at J17, J18, or J19 (see link above). All public car parks are equidistant from the launch site, which is in the middle of the park.

Notes to Editors o The balloon is being launched by staff from the Centre for Atmospheric Science, University of Manchester, in conjunction with the North West Local Centre of the Royal Meteorological Society. o The balloon will be launched at 12 noon o The media and public are invited to attend. Activities will be running from an hour before the launch. o Further information about the balloon launch will be available on www.rmets.org and www.Metlink.org. Information regarding the participating institutions may be found on the web at: Manchester University Centre for Atmospheric Science <http://www.cas.manchester.ac.uk/> Royal Meteorological Society <http://www.rmets.org/>