

Press release

**8 July 2009**

**Media Information and Images: David Garner 01904 432153**

## **Fun for all the family at York pond open day**

An open day at Chapman's Pond in Dringhouses, York, will combine serious science with fun for children.

The OPAL (Open Air Laboratories) team at the University of York and the Friends of Chapman's Pond are organising the event this Saturday (2pm-5pm).

Open Air Laboratories is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and led in Yorkshire and the Humber by the Environment Department and the Stockholm Environment Institute at the University.

The event coincides with the quarterly visit of the OPAL Water Team – scientists from University College London -- to assess water pollution and its effects on aquatic plants and animals. Every three months, the scientists visit Chapman's Pond and take water samples to examine its temperature, clarity, levels of oxygen and nutrients.

They also sample the mud at the bottom of the pond, in the form of sediment cores. These allow the scientists to assess how pollution levels have changed over time.

OPAL Community Scientist, Sarah West, said: "The OPAL team will be on hand to answer questions about Chapman's Pond, and we shall also be running activities for children, including pond-dipping, nature-trails and face-painting. It will be a fun day for everyone"

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors:**

- Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) received a grant from the Big Lottery Fund in August 2007. It aims to create a new generation of nature-lovers by getting people to engage with the natural world around them. To find out more visit [www.OPALexplorenature.org](http://www.OPALexplorenature.org)
- The [Environment Department](#) at the University of York was founded in 1992, initially to integrate ecological and environmental sciences with environmental economics. The aim was to improve understanding of environmental problems, and how to solve them, through the consideration of both the human dimension and the underpinning science. Its objective is to develop sustainable solutions to environmental problems that are consistent with human aspirations and with global, regional and local institutions and markets.
- More information on the Stockholm Environment Institute at York at [www.sei.se](http://www.sei.se)
- The Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme was launched in November 2005 to help communities enjoy and improve their local environments. The programme funds a range of activities from local food schemes and farmers markets, to education projects teaching people about the environment. Imperial College London (the leading OPAL partner) was awarded a **£11,760,783** Changing Spaces grant in August 2007

- The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004. It was established by Parliament on 1 December 2006. Full details of the work of the Big Lottery Fund, its programmes and awards are available on the website: [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk)