

# Schools roped into some exciting experiments during the Chemistry at work week

Bitrez were pleased to have the opportunity to support and contribute at the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and Museum, “Chemistry at Work Week 2024”, whereby students met and engaged with six local scientific industries. They learnt about the different careers available, what a typical day looks like in one of these jobs, pathways to getting a similar job and take part in a practical science activity related to that company.

After giving an introduction and overview about Bitrez as a business, and a little about their own roles there was a video presentation. This featured a brief summary of polymers and the importance of their role in our everyday life, including a short video to show the secret of the internal lacquer that is present in food and beverage cans.

Following this it was time for an experiment and the gloves were off, well actually the gloves were on, along with other PPE as Dr Thomas Mangnall and Wendy Howarth presented an interactive experiment with audience participation in the generation of Nylon from monomer feedstock. The “Nylon rope trick” and explanatory information about polymers was presented to multiple

groups over the 2 days. Under the watchful eye of Wendy, the volunteers (including some enthusiastic staff members from the Centre) donned their white coats, gloves, and protective glasses looking every bit the scientist of the future, and with some steering and guidance from Tom they capably managed to replicate the experiment that Tom had previously demonstrated. Carothers would have been proud, as volunteers placed their glass rods through the upper phase to magically draw Nylon from the interface by winding up the long thread of nylon rope around their rods.

The event also allowed us to bring the newly commissioned Chemploy interactive game displayed on the ground floor of the Centre to the attention of the attendees, giving them an opportunity to compare the Avatars displayed within the game with the original staff members presenting in person.

Paul Jones, Managing Director attended the event and joined some of the classes to watch his colleagues, commenting, “It was great to see so many young people interested in the presentation, and I was surprised just how engaged they were when undertaking the experiment. I interface with Tom and Wendy on a daily basis, and it was a pleasure to see them offer such a professional yet interesting and balanced portrayal of chemistry in Bitrez. I also took the opportunity to watch the other excellent presentations, and it was quite apparent that the whole event was perfectly organised and a huge success.”

Tom and Wendy undertook 6 sessions a day over the 2 days and could probably present and perform in their sleep by the end of the event. They wrapped up their reagents, glassware, and other equipment before making the short journey back along the M6 to their customary roles in the business helping to develop and promote new and disruptive chemistry to satisfy market needs. We are sure the event will have helped inspire some young people and maybe provide some insight into life in the chemical industry.

Maybe sat amongst the observing pupils is our next Sales and Marketing Executive, Research and Development Manager or Managing Director. Who knows, but Science is about education, information, and sharing that information so it can be used to aid progress. We wish everyone who presented, attended, or hosted the event our warmest thanks and best wishes and we hope to see you soon.

**For further details visit <https://www.bitrez.com/>**

