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Rapid Climate Change (RAPID) – latest results and future plans

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The RAPID programme seeks to determine whether changes in the North Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (MOC – and so the thermohaline circulation, THC) could occur due to global warming, using a combination of present day observations, paleo observations and modelling. Such changes could have a significant impact on the climate of NW Europe. Internationally the programme has been carried out in collaboration with Dutch, Norwegian, German and US scientists, and more recently with Canadian scientists. In this paper the latest results from the observational, paleo and modelling aspects programme will be presented; including some on the monitoring of the MOC being carried out at 26.5°N in the North Atlantic. The data from the first year of observations at 26.5°N indicate that the MOC is highly variable, which has implications for understanding past and future changes in the MOC and for modelling such changes. The paper will also describe the future plans for the RAPID programme.