



"Foreign Correspondent"
Michael Ludwig reports on interesting news from the natural world.

Knowledge from Ice cubes!

Glaciers that extend high into the Alps and cover other places in the world are melting due to climate change. These glaciers are time capsules of the thousands of years they took to form.

When they were collecting snow and ice they trapped bubbles of the atmosphere within the ice. By analysing the bubbles scientists can learn a lot about Earth's atmosphere over those millennia.

To preserve samples of ice for future research, scientists are drilling into the glaciers and removing core samples – metre-long columns of ice.

These samples are currently being stored in special freezers but will eventually be moved to a specially constructed snow cave in the coldest place on Earth, the Antarctic. There they will be available for future climate change researchers.

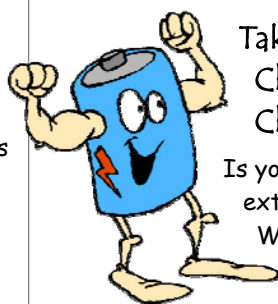


Successful End of a Space Mission

In the Autumn 2014 issue, we wrote about the European Space Agency's 'Rosetta' spacecraft and how after 10 years and traveling some 405 million kilometres from Earth it had finally caught up with Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko.

The mission took lots of pictures but sadly a "lander" probe tumbled on landing and became wedged under rocks. Without sunlight, it eventually lost power and was only located by "Rosetta" just before the mission ended. During the 12 year mission, (two in orbit around it), "Rosetta" has collected enough data to keep scientists busy for decades. The mission ended when the spacecraft was deliberately crashed into the comet at the end of September.

Because the spacecraft was solar powered and moving away from the sun, it was dying by losing power. Crash-landing it into the comet allowed scientists to take and record very clear and upclose images of the comet's surface, just before the crash. Great photos AND a bittersweet ending!



Take part in the WEEE Pledge 2 Schools Recycling Challenge to help the planet & the Laura Lynn Charity!

Is your school in search of a green flag or just looking for an extra initiative for your school to participate in? Then the WEEE Pledge schools battery recycling challenge is just the thing for you and your pupils. It is free and easy to implement. All you have to do is sign your school up to take the WEEE Pledge to recycle waste batteries and WEEE can help you do it! By recycling batteries through the schools recycling programme you will be helping to raise vital funds for LauraLynn, Ireland's Children's Hospice (www.LauraLynn.ie) and also helping to protect the environment. Check out www.weeepledge.ie for more details and useful tips!

Birds of a feather, flock together?

As Hurricane Matthew was wreaking havoc throughout the Caribbean and along the southern east coast of the United States, meteorologists made an interesting observation when viewing radar images of the violent storm. Right in the eye of the hurricane, where the weather is calm and clear, flocks of birds could be detected.

It seems that some of the birds caught up in the storm managed to reach its centre and took shelter within the hurricane! They moved along with the storm rather than trying to make their way back through the violent storm winds.

They left their "shelter" when the winds died down. Nice thinking and flying!

