



The World Around Us



"Foreign Correspondent"
Michael Ludwig reports on
some strange goings on in the
natural world.

Catching a Dinosaur's Tail 99 Million Years Later!

A piece of amber from a mine in the northern Myanmar has revealed a 'treasure' from 99 million years ago—a 3.5 cm piece of a dinosaur's tail. These skeletal remains of a dinosaur are the first of its kind to have been found in amber. They not only contain bones and soft tissue but also have feathers attached. The tail belonged to a dinosaur probably no bigger than a sparrow.



Discovered at an amber market in Myanmar by Dr. Lida Xing, a palaeontologist from the China University of Geosciences at Beijing, he and his team have CT scanned the sample and studied it under the microscope. It gives them great insight into the evolution of feathers from dinosaurs to modern birds.

Amber is the fossilized plant resin from ancient forests. When the plant resin oozed down the trees it often caught bits of plants, small insects and the like, trapping them in its golden liquid. As the resin hardened and fossilized over millions of years, it turns into a beautiful gemstone, greatly prized in jewellery making, folk medicine and for making amber oil.



Time to Prepare for Tree Week 2017!

Yes, we're in the middle of winter but early January is the perfect time to start planning for **Tree Week 2017**, which runs from Sunday March 5th until Sunday March 12th. To be part of National Tree Week, the Tree Council of Ireland invites

you to organise one or more events for the week to celebrate trees. As well as tree planting ceremonies, the range of events can include forest and woodland walks, nature trails, work-



shops, woodturning displays, talks, tree hugging, tree climbing, broadcasts, launches, poetry readings, exhibitions, competitions and tree plantations where communities are challenged to plant a target number of trees on a designated local site over a fixed time period. Don't forget to register your event, so that other people can come and join you!
www.treecouncil.ie

2016-2017 Storms in Ireland and the United Kingdom

The National Meteorological Services of Ireland (Met Éireann) and the United Kingdom (Met Office) will be naming wind storms again when the following criteria are met:

- a wind storm with potential for significant land-based impact has been forecast by Duty Forecasters in both Met Éireann and the Met Office.
- Severe wind events giving rise to status Orange or status Red weather warnings.
- Consideration will also be given to rain and snow events.

For an explanation of the Met Éireann weather warning system, see www.met.ie

The last storm to be named in the 2015/2016 season, was Storm Katie, which occur from 25 – 28 March 2016 and mostly affected southern England. How many storms do you think Ireland and the United Kingdom will have in the winter/spring of 2016/2017?

2016-2017:

Angus	Kamil
Barbara	Louise
Conor	Malcolm
Doris	Natalie
Ewan	Oisín
Fleur	Penelope
Gabriel	Robert
Holly	Susan
Ivor	Thomas
Jacqui	Valerie
	Wilbert

Image courtesy of Robbie Murphy



Ready-made Snowballs on a Siberian Beach

Imagine having ready-made snowballs for an afternoon of playing in the snow! On a 18km stretch of coast on the Gulf of Ob in northwest Siberia, locals had just that—but they were probably not the type you could chuck at your friends! Ball of ice, from the size of a tennis ball up to a 1m in diameter, were formed when small pieces of ice were rolled about by the wind and water, eventually forming into giant snowballs. Though locals had never seen an occurrence of this kind before, similar events have occurred in other parts of the world. The combination of wind, temperatures and coastal topography created special conditions for this phenomenon to happen.

