



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 111
January 2020

<http://www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org/>

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS

By Steve Sharp

Hydro scheme update

The rain is raining all around,
It falls on field and tree,
It rains on the umbrellas here,
And on the ships at sea.

Robert Louis Stevenson

The rains have continued to fall in South Wales and, as a result, both rainfall and electricity generation from our five hydro schemes were at record high levels in the last quarter of 2019. December's generation was actually 2.5% down on the same month in 2018 but rainfall at our recording station in Llangattock was the highest monthly figure since we started recording this data in October 2018. For the sake of completeness, I have entered the December data into the graph from last month's newsletter and the resultant image is below.



I have been doing rain dances for some friends in Australia but I'll leave it our readers to decide whether you'd like the rainfall to continue in the UK throughout 2020.



NEW YEAR - 2020 WOODLANDERS CREATE AND PLAN

By Jackie Charlton



Llangattock Community Woodlanders are our very enthusiastic youth section of Llangattock Community Woodlands. They have been meeting every month for just over a year now, have recorded all the activities they have planned and executed on the site and have now asked for support for things they want to do in 2020.

The group currently consists of up to 16 young people with the age range of 2-13 years. Some participants have a range of additional learning and medical needs. All parents are involved in the planning and delivery of sessions as well as the inclusion and safety of participants and are responsible for the children whilst on site.



Putting up the TROLLS

Here is a quote from Sarah Kilbride, mum of two of the children:

"The Woodlanders group has provided our children with an invaluable experience of the outdoors. We have played and learnt together about the woodland and its inhabitants and how the delicate ecosystems that surround us are so important for conservation. We have fun letting the children tell us what to do and they have developed a strong social group, supporting each other's needs, recognising strengths and embracing others' interests. The woodland offers children and families a large, natural space to explore and inhabit. Everyone enjoys this experience, which enriches us all in every way."

Plans for next year include:

- Create woodland weaving, sculptures, dream catchers
- Learn to whittle
- Create tree hangings and journey sticks from bits and pieces on woodland floor
- Measure rainfall and sunshine hours over a set period to understand climate conditions of this habitat
- Hold a physical outdoor challenge such as an orienteering championship, working in teams
- Consider positive contribution to local wildlife, woodland and wider natural world. Discuss how all of us can make personal changes and a positive contribution to the environment, locally and on a wider scale.



Orienteering instructions – now, will we get lost?

STREAM CLEAN 2020

I told you last month how we have started to clean out the streams to help them breathe and ensure the habitat retains the unique element of this woodland which Alders love: wet roots. The weather has been very poor since our last newsletter and several sessions have been shortened due to wet and windy conditions. However, on New Year's Eve there were some committed volunteers who came and cleared the beautiful stream which exits from our site and goes under the canal through several amazing arches built in 1812.



Piling up the debris from the stream and edges

We removed several fallen trees which were across the stream and a big holly bush which hampered movement around our coppice square. In March, we plan to do a Community Stream Clean to prepare the site for the spring and encourage amphibians to the site including frogs, toads, newts and grass snakes. The only amphibians we haven't seen on the site yet are newts, so our plan is to provide the best habitat we can for these wonderful and precious creatures.



Flowing free, out under the canal and into The Usk just a mile away



BOB'S BEE NOTES - JANUARY

This month is a time for reading, catching up with record keeping, making up new kit and repairing of hive equipment. I am fortunate to have access to woodwork machinery, enabling me to make some simple hive components and experimental equipment for myself and beekeeping groups I am associated with.

The last two seasons have not been good for the bees or beekeepers, mainly because of the weather; winter has been warm and wet when we normally expect colder conditions both day and night. During these mild spells, the winter bees are out and about using up energy. In summer, we normally expect warm with some wet but it's been too hot and dry, so there has not been much nectar to collect and the Queens stop laying.

Winter bees come from eggs laid during the autumn months and are fed on high pollen diets to give them the fat bodies needed for over-wintering and these bees are able to cluster for months. Summer bees work themselves to death collecting stores over the few weeks that they live to keep the hive going over winter for the good of a surviving colony. Most of our bee colonies went into the last two winters low on numbers because of the previous poor summers, then came out of the mild winter working hard. The weather changed and we had cold and snow in March, eggs and brood were chilled and lost as there were not enough bees to cover the brood nest area when that happened. Looking at debris found on the monitoring boards under the hive I saw bees had been collecting pollen from snowdrops, an indicator the colony is alive.



Inspecting a frame in Bath

Last week I was at the Bath Beekeepers' teaching apiary just outside Bath where they were getting an observation hive set up ready for the teaching course they run each spring, in time for the new beekeeping season. The photos show all the work being undertaken at this very prestigious teaching site.



Learning in a safe environment at Bath

Enjoy your winter read

Bee Bob



LCW Trustees are justly proud of the commitment and enthusiasm of all our volunteers. We meet regularly every Tuesday and you can find information on where and when we meet on our website www.lcwg.btck.co.uk. If you are interested in environmental management, green wood crafts or bee keeping then please do get in touch. Please email Eric Gower eric.gower@gmail.com for a membership form.

BLAEN DYAR AND MICRO HYDRO WALK – Saturday 14th March, 10 -1pm



Micro hydro video still by Penny Hallas

This short but varied walk follows the route of one of LGV's micro-hydro schemes and we will see how it has embedded into the natural scenery since it was constructed two years ago. Leaving Clydach village, we walk up to the impressive railway viaduct. Skirting the foot of former limestone quarries we visit the hydro intake weir before descending to view the turbine shed. The walk will end at the historic Clydach Ironworks where we will see more about past uses of water in this intriguing valley where nature and industry meet. Join us later the same day from 2:30-5pm for a short hydro video presentation at Scout Hall, Crickhowell.

For further details and to book your place on the walk, please visit: [Crickhowell Walking Festival](#)

Please also note: Walk times above are correct and well-behaved dogs are welcome to come too!

LGV VOLUNTEERS NEEDED PLEASE! CAN YOU HELP?

We are looking for a number of people who would like to get involved at Director and non-Director level. Please get in touch with Andrew Fryer if you would like to explore the ways in which you can help: andrewfryer70@gmail.com. You can meet our Board of Directors [here](#).

We'd also like to get a few more volunteers involved in monitoring the hydro schemes and taking readings. This would only take around an hour or so once every 6-9 weeks. If you are interested in helping, please contact Simon Walter admin@llangattockgreenvalleys.org.

www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org

[@LGVcic](#)

[Facebook](#)