



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

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

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS

By Steve Sharp

Hydro scheme update

Unless you have been on a small island many million miles from Wales with no Internet during the past month, you'll know that we've experienced our share of torrential rain and floods – and some. In Crickhowell, a 17th century pub The Bridge End Inn and The Vine Tree on the Llangattock side of the bridge were both badly flooded, along with several small business units and some houses in low-lying streets.

A photo of the flooding is below and our thoughts go out to those affected. These included LGV directors Sue Cartlidge, whose chiropractic studio was significantly damaged, and Andrew Fryer, who was renting the pink house in the photograph before he was awoken and rescued by firemen in the early hours.

For the hydro schemes, the rain has meant consistently high generation of electricity throughout the month, which now makes it five very productive months in a row.





WEATHER WARNINGS

By Jackie Charlton



We don't want any more wet and windy weather in our woodland, it's saturated and very soggy. We have used old pallets very effectively this year which has at least kept our feet out of the mud and mess which is now under the pallets. During Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis our village was battered and saw some of the worst flooding ever recorded in this valley. Last year we spent a long time putting together three very fancy wood stores to cover processed wood that is sold throughout the year.

Without them through the record breaking wet winter we could not have continued to deliver the wood to customers as it would have been too

wet to burn. It is important our reputation for selling good quality wood fuel, that is sustainably collected and stored, remains intact. No heat dried logs for our customers but the best way you can sustainably keep wood fuel clean is to allow it to dry out naturally.



BOB'S BEE NOTES - FEBRUARY and MARCH

In recent years, February's weather has been extremely changeable so now I expect it to be warm, wet, cold, windy, snowy and stormy, and we got all of that big time! To manage this, I work on the hives in the autumn and make secure all hives using ratchet straps, which

clamp over the hive roof then under the hive stand. I hope the weight of the hive plus the strapping is enough to stop any damage to the equipment in high winds. Some years, I have found hives on their sides strapped together and the bees had somehow still survived, so now the straps also go under the stands to give more stability.

Standard winter checks are quite straight forward. At least once a month I have to go to each hive with a collection pot to collect the dead Varroa mites from the monitoring board below the mesh floor and also check if the fondant has been eaten and, if so, the bag is replaced. During the winter, monitoring boards are left in place mainly for mite monitoring and in extreme cases to reduce excessive drafts caused by wind. Using a fine paint brush to avoid damaging the Varroa, I count and collect them for later inspection using a microscope. I look for numbers of dead Varroa to give me an estimate of the population inside the hive, which determines whether I need to give an emergency treatment or not.



Bees feasting on fondant

The mites are examined for damage because some bees have the ability to defend themselves from the mites by biting their legs and carapace (exoskeleton). If this trait is present, virgin Queens are reared from that colony to produce drones that can spread this attribute and strengthen the gene pool in the hives. The checks will also tell me if the colony is alive by piles of beeswax cappings showing up on the board below where the bees are clustered, produced by the bees when they have eaten the stores between the frames.

As I am writing this, more storms are raging outside so as soon as I can, this month's checks will begin in earnest. I hope your checks are going well.

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.

MILES WITHOUT STILES - PARTNERSHIP WORKING SUCCESS!

The Miles without Stiles project forms part of the Healthy, Active and Outdoors project which was developed as a partnership between Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Powys County Council and Natural Resources Wales.



Llangattock Green Valleys built a bridge into the woodland area we manage some five years ago because there was no access for wheelchairs or pushchairs. The National Park Authority saw the importance of this and rebuilt the bridge to the river walk last year, so there is now good access into the wood and along the river bank with a new, flat surface.

The Healthy, Active and Outdoors Miles without Stiles project was designed to remove barriers for those who find countryside access more difficult. The project focuses on key

centres of population both inside and outside the National Park, with Brecon, Crickhowell, Talgarth within the Park and Builth Wells, Llandrindod Wells, Newtown and Welshpool in Powys.

So far, National Park Wardens have replaced 52 stiles with gates and a 12m span bridge has been installed in Crickhowell Bullpit Meadows to replace a narrow bridge that previously restricted wheel chair access.

By working with communities, the aim is to target paths that can provide a network of routes that could become accessible to a much wider range of people, including those with disabilities, mobility difficulties, people with young families and dog walkers.

Josie Pearson – Paralympic gold medallist, who has been part of the steering committee, congratulated the work that the wardens have done:

"I am so grateful to the Brecon Beacons National Park, their volunteers, Hay Town Council and everyone else involved in helping to make the countryside more accessible for all. Being able to access the countryside is everyone's right, for physical and mental wellbeing".

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.

LACAS

By Sue Cartlidge

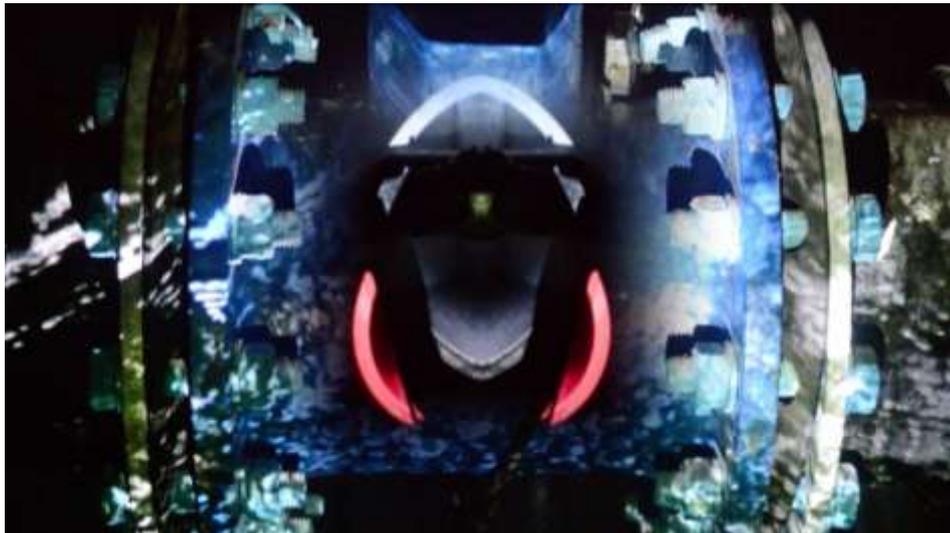
After what seems like a long, damp and grey winter, allotmenters are now beginning to sow seeds to produce dinners later in the year!

The Welsh Government is running a consultation regarding permitting glasshouses and sheds on allotments, which have not been allowed on the allotment field to date, and LACAS will be submitting a response largely welcoming the proposal.

Little Weed.... Usually we don't encourage overgrowth of weeds on the plots. However, according to the British Ecological Society, gardeners should avoid mowing over dandelions if they want to help bees. Dandelions, which will start flowering soon, provide a valuable source of food for early pollinators coming out of hibernation, including solitary bees, honey bees and hoverflies. Each dandelion head has up to 100 individual flowers, known as florets, which contain nectar and pollen. So don't uproot your dandelion flowers.... but maybe trim the seedheads off!

We have a couple of half-plots available, so if you're in the market for growing your own, please contact Sue Cartlidge on llangattockallotments@gmail.com. We also have a vacancy in the Chicken Group if you like your eggs super-fresh – contact Sue if you are interested in joining the group.

BLAEN DYAR AND MICRO HYDRO WALK – Saturday 14th March, 10 -1pm
HURRY! There are only 4 places left at the time of writing.



Micro hydro video still by Penny Hallas

This short but varied walk follows the route of Blaen Dyar, 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!

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