



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 113
April 2020

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

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS

By Steve Sharp

Hydro scheme update

Heavy rain continued through the first half of March in Wales and the last two quarters from last October saw some excellent electricity generation at all five of our hydro sites. This produced some decent income for our LGV MH2 Co-operative through Feed-in Tariffs and export payments and some of this will be reflected in our 2019 accounts. Members will be sent these and other information before our **15th June AGM**, which is likely to be our first virtual meeting.

During the downpours there was a landslip at our Cwm Saerbren scheme in Treherbert, which washed away much of the coal mining waste and rocks which were supporting the penstock pipe. The bank of one of the two feeder streams also gave way, causing some water to be diverted away from the intake area. Our partner community group 'Welcome to our Woods' did some good initial repair work and the landlord, NRW, responded quickly with some heavy equipment to make the area safe and repair the bank of the stream. We will be doing some further work at the site ourselves to secure the penstock once the ground has fully dried out.



Photo: Exposed penstock pipe at Cwm Saerbren following the landslip in early March

The sun came out later in March and there has been plenty of sunshine since then, so the hydros have mostly been inactive. The upside is that we've had some excellent gardening weather throughout April for those fortunate enough to have an outside space to enjoy during the lock down.

And as we find ourselves in this strange period of viral isolation and contemplation, this is an optimistic post from the Byron Writers Festival.....

'And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently. And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal. And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.'

- Kitty O'Meara



COVID-19 and LOCK DOWN in LLANGATTOCK

By Jackie Charlton



Here in Llangattock Community Woodlands we survived the floods, just, only to be hit by the world pandemic. We spent time in February clearing up around our site. In March we were really looking forward to the spring get-together to clean up the streams ready to allow frogs, toads and hopefully newts to come and do their best to improve the populations of amphibians on site. A new group was looking for a safe area to bring vulnerable adults to gather and work together but we had to cancel as the weather was so poor. March and April looked good but COVID-19 delayed that, so we are hoping to reconvene in June or July.



Marsh marigold or kingcup or caltha palustris, which loves wet areas in our woodland.



The 1st butterfly, a Peacock, seen on our last woodland workday in March

At lock down, like so many other small charities, we had to abandon all thought of work and activity as soon as the government issued new regulations. We are living through unprecedented times and our group is collectively saddened by many families losing loved ones, so we consider our frustrations as minor.

We will be back together as a volunteer group as soon as regulations allow, with so much planned including charcoal making, bird and bat box making, strimming and clearing the site of brambles and bracken - and of course processing wood for wood fuel and winter stores for our customers. Our charity relies entirely on charcoal, honey and wood fuel sales to fund our work and help to improve the environment, thereby making small contributions to carbon capture and climate change mitigation, which is what we were set up to do.



BOB'S BEE NOTES - APRIL and MARCH

Beekeeping activities are still allowed at the moment as long as we are observing social distancing rules. Fortunately I keep my bees away from areas where people can hang out, so I am not having to make special arrangements when I inspect them. The good weather we experienced at the beginning of April has meant some colonies have expanded to the point of feeling they need to swarm; I had a report of a swarm two weeks ago from a small hive as the bees probably ran out of space. As I am writing, it is raining outside so the parched ground will have moisture again to feed growing plants, some of which will be in bloom, allowing the bees to collect nectar. When this happens and the weather warms up we get what is known as a nectar flow. Flowers secrete nectar in abundance and the bees love it. There can be so much nectar that needs to be processed by the younger bees still to leave the hive that they are unable to cope and as soon as bees emerge from their cells it is filled with nectar, leading to overcrowding and sometimes swarming. "A Swarm in May is worth a rick of hay".



Mould or Chalk Brood?

I have been advising Llangattock Community Woodlands about their bees from my self-isolating lock down in Bath. Jackie has been sending information about the bees after inspection and was particularly worried this week (22 April 2020). She sent me these photos.

The white I can see in the photo is mouldy pollen; Jackie needs to check for herself by carefully removing one of the white things and then with the hive tool gently breaking it up and it should break into the original pollen pieces. If it is chalk brood, which would be worrying, it will be loose in the cell and have the shape and outline of a larva, but chalk brood can also be black. Let's hope it is mouldy pollen and not chalk brood so we can have a good honey year. The other picture she sent was much more pleasing, with a healthy brood with hope of honey to harvest.



From the healthy hive which is very strong this year and has hatching larvae

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.

SPECIAL NOTICE

By Tricia Dorée

You may have noticed that we did not produce a March edition of the newsletter. This was a considered decision! Now that all the micro hydro schemes are up and running and there is a little less news to report, we have taken the decision to reduce the frequency of our newsletters to once every two months. We hope you are happy with this new arrangement and we will be in touch again in June, after our AGM. Thank you to all our newsletter subscribers and everyone else who supports us in their varying ways. Keep safe and well.

LACAS

By Sue Cartlidge



On the allotment site, in spite of the lockdown, we have been fortunate enough to be allowed to tend our plots, subject of course to the familiar regulations of two metres apart – easily achieved on the allotment site, plenty of handwashing (not in the communal water butts!), don't share garden tools, and sanitise hands after using gates, etc.

Cultivating the allotment has been a very welcome activity for many of us, and I'm sure it contributes to our daily exercise and mental wellbeing. Some folks however have not been able to get to their plots due to self-isolation, and we have been trying to arrange for temporary "caretakers" to maintain the ground until such time as the plot holders can return.

This time last year we were planning our Big Lunch get together, but of course all events are cancelled for the time being. We had set a date for our Summer Show for Saturday 29th August – but we will have to see how things are shaping up before we can commit to that date. One of our allotmentees suggested that once the current crisis has passed, we should have a very large party to celebrate the NHS. I hope the rest of the committee, once we meet again, will agree!!

We have welcomed a number of new members this spring so that anybody wanting a plot now will have to join a waiting list. Do contact me, Sue Cartlidge, if you are interested in growing your own fruit and veggies, and your name can be put on the list:

llangattockallotments@gmail.com. We also have a vacancy in the Chicken Group if you like your eggs super-fresh – contact Phil Gibson on gibsons@uwclub.net if you are interested in joining the group.

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

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)