



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 82
May 2017

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

LACAS

Llangattock Area Community Allotment Society is Out To Lunch on **SUNDAY**

Some of our more observant readers may have noticed that the 18th of June is in fact a Sunday, so please come along on **Sunday**.

This summer we have a new venture: we are participating in The Big Lunch, in fact we are having our very own big lunch on the allotment site on **Sunday** 18th June.

The Big Lunch is the UK's annual get-together for neighbours. Every year since the idea began in 2009, millions of people stop what they're doing and get together with neighbours in a nationwide act of community and friendship.

All comers will be welcome – the only thing you have to do is bring a dish of your favourite food to share with all the other Big Lunchers. More details about Big Lunch events nationwide can be found on www.edenprojectcommunities.com



And if by any chance you are looking for an allotment, we do have some available at the moment. Contact Phil Gibson on 01873 811537 or gibsons@uwclub.net

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

By Steve Sharp

Hydro – MH-1 and MH-2 updates:



A lot of comment has appeared in the media recently about the 2016/17 winter having been the driest for over 20 years and there was less than half average UK rainfall in April as well, so there has been little generation by LGV's two hydro schemes this month.

TGVH's models and the hydrologist's report indicate that we should be able to increase the water flow through the Cwm Gu scheme (MH-1), which will have a positive effect on electricity generation. TGVH is in discussions with NRW and the application to adjust the size of the

hands-off flow notch will be submitted soon.

Construction is continuing at Blaen Dyar; the intake concrete has been poured, the penstock pipes have been butt-welded and dragged into position in lengths of about 100m and work has started on the turbine house.

Don't forget that the **Co-op hydro AGMs** (LGV-MH1 and LGV-MH2) will take place in the evening of **Monday 5th June**, at **The Old Rectory Hotel in Llangattock**. The **MH1 AGM will start at 18.30** and **MH2 at 19.30**. An invitation and AGM papers will be going out soon to all the shareholders, who are very welcome to attend.



Blaen Dyar image (previous page): Burying pipes under the viaduct by Penny Hallas

Blaen Dyar image (above): Turbine house foundations by Penny Hallas



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: andrew@wernwatkin.fsnet.co.uk

You can **meet our current Board of Directors** [here](#).

CUT IT! SAVE IT!

By Peter Blood, Director Llangattock Green Valleys CIC and LGV Ventures

The efforts of Llangattock Green Valleys to reduce carbon emissions has focused on clean generation of electricity, chiefly by building micro-hydro schemes. However, about 60% of UK domestic energy consumption is heating of our houses and very little of that uses electricity; more usual fuels are oil, gas and coal. So what's to be done about "decarbonising" heating? What LGV wants to do here is give you some other ways of reducing, renewing and recycling energy in your home.

Well, you could install a biomass boiler or a heat pump. Even better, tackle the problem at source by reducing the energy needed to heat the building in the first place. That brings benefits whatever fuel is used. Improvements to insulation over recent years have produced a modest fall in energy use across UK households but how far can we go? Do we need a heating system at all?

The Passive House Institute in Darmstadt has devised an approach to building new homes where the energy lost is so small that the internal temperature is maintained by "passive" sources of heat, principally solar radiation, waste heat from electrical appliances such as cookers, fridges and the like, and our bodies. The key to this is not only plenty of insulation

and high performance windows but elimination of draughts, responsible for about 15% of the heat loss in the average house. This is done by making the building airtight, providing a continuous supply of filtered air which is heated by “warm” air extracted from bathrooms and kitchens (*see photograph to the right*), which also prevents the build-up of moisture, improving air quality and comfort as well as saving energy.



Very few of us are about to build a new house and reducing energy used for domestic heating in this way is a very slow process. With this in mind, the Passive House Institute has introduced a scheme to apply these measures to existing buildings, a process termed “retrofit”. The energy saving cannot be as great as with a new build, for example heat is lost through the foundations, but



the benefits can still be very significant: a factor of five or more. Retrofitting is expensive and it’s unlikely the cost will be recovered through reduced bills. What does make more sense, though, is if the house is going to be refurbished or an extension built, then incorporating these measures incurs little additional cost. For example when we “retrofitted” our house, the cost of fitting 8 inch thick external insulation (*see image left*) was not much greater than for 2 inch panels commonly used. And it works: over

the first year, the energy used for domestic heating is six times less than calculated on the Energy Performance Certificate for the house before the work started. That’s just six 47 kg cylinders of LPG.

These principles can be applied to smaller projects, so if you are thinking about adding an extension to your house, don’t be content with what building regulations require: you can do much better! You’ll be keeping your bills and CO₂ emissions under control. If you want to know more, please do get in touch, peter.blood@langattockgreenvalleys.org; there is much more to tell.



PODS POTENTIAL

By Jackie Charlton

LCW took delivery of two out of service ‘PODS’ from Canal & River Trust this month. They are no longer needed for service work along the canal so we will convert them for storage and shelter. It was really exciting seeing them arrive and being put in place. They are a bit blue at the moment!! So that brings me on to the next bit of exciting news. Arts Alive Wales are currently working with an artist who is responding to the environment and ecology of the





area, using local resources to produce work. Rebecca Spooner, Creative Director at AAW said: "Artist Pete Fowler is on a research visit to the Black Mountains looking for ideas to produce new work for our Horsebox Studio at the Green Man Festival this year. The Alder Carr provides brilliant inspiration and materials for him to progress that work."

You can find out more about Peter here:

<http://petefowershop.com>

<https://petefowler.tumblr.com/>

BBC Wales visited the Alder Carr last week and did two 'runs' on volunteering in Llangattock with Canal & River Trust, one at lunchtime and one in the evening. If you read Bob Bee notes each month, you would have seen our star Bee Keeper giving the low down on what LCW do along the canal. It was a stunning day and the canal was dressed for the occasion with sun shining and the bluebells showing their best blue. Sadly, it is only available on iPlayer for a day so I can't provide you with a link, but you might have just caught it on Wales Today.



LCW ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We had a successful AGM on 9th May. Sausages and burgers enjoyed by all with a good turnout. Our Annual Report is available should you wish to have a copy. Just email jackiecharltonlqv@gmail.com. Our accounts will be available soon, once we have had them certified ready to be sent to Companies House and the Charity Commission.



ALDER CARR LOTTERY

Llangattock Community Woodlands now runs a small lottery which has the potential to raise over £1000 for environmental measures and equipment each year for Llangattock Community Woodlands. For more information, please contact jackiecharltonlqv@gmail.com or andrewgpeach@gmail.com.

The **Alder Carr Lottery** is registered under the Gambling Act 2005 and has a Small Society Lotteries Registration Certificate. Registration No: LN/201600367.



Charter
for Trees, Woods
and People

Woodland Charter new project ideas are on the way from the Woodland Trust.



Bob Bee notes for May

In Bob Bee notes last month you will recall me explaining about the complexities of swarming; well now it has started. All of the beekeeping groups and individuals I am associated with want to expand the number of colonies they have so they are getting equipment assembled ready to receive swarms or splits from a colony attempting to swarm or replacing its Queen. I was near one of the Llangattock Community Woodlands' colonies today and heard the sound of a virgin Queen piping, that is, making a high pitched sound telling her sisters she is about to emerge from her cell. When I heard the sound I knew there would be swarm cells or newly emerged virgin Queens present so we could take advantage of the situation and make up another colony using the Queen cell, young bees and some food. Sure enough, there was no original Queen present but what had happened was 'supercedure'. This is when the colony replaces its Queen without swarming and we were very fortunate to see and prevent a virgin Queen from attempting to kill her sister who was still inside her cell. I left the virgin Queen in the original hive and moved the Queen cells into another new hive close by, with extra food as all the foraging bees would stay with the original hive where the virgin Queen was seen.

The Allotment Bee Group also had to inspect the colonies for the ten day inspection. We found another 'supercedure' taking place there, with the old Queen still in residence. This time we moved the old Queen away from the original hive with one of the Queen cells to enable the 'supercedure' to take place naturally. Once the swarming urge has passed, colony inspections can be reduced to just checking there is sufficient space for the bees to store honey.

When we have new Queens heading colonies, it is an opportunity to get rid of Varroa mites. In the time between the last bee emerging from its cell and the first cell of the new Queen's brood being capped, all the Varroa will be exposed on the adult bees. This is the time to attack the mites using icing sugar as a dust that will encourage the bees to groom, so knocking off the mites at the same time, a simple, non-chemical intervention that works. We may have a problem soon if there is no rain as it so dry underfoot. Plants need moisture to send up the flower stems to the flowers where bees collect the natural sugars in the nectar. When drought conditions are experienced the nectar dries up and bees go short of food, so the Queens go off lay. This period of no bees being produced has a knock on effect about six weeks later when the eggs that would normally be laid would become foraging bees, so producing honey later on in the year.



Last week I collected my first swarm that had found its way into a hollow porch roof. While investigating a way to get to the swarm I discovered an enormous old wasp nest that had a buff tailed bumble bee starting to build its nest in the debris. The swarm was knocked down into a box positioned directly under it and taken away the following evening, when the bees were all inside.

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, please do get in touch. Please email Eric Gower eric.gower@gmail.com for a membership form.

PLEASE ASK US!

If anybody would like to look at LGV's finances or discuss our schemes, please contact us and we will be very happy to help. We are proud to be operating a transparent and successful Community Interest Company.

You may also find useful answers to our [frequently asked questions](#) on the LGV website.

To find out more about us or to become a member, please visit:

www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org

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