



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 105
June 2019

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

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS

By Steve Sharp

Hydro scheme update

There was not much rain in May but I understand that, whilst I was sweltering in Slovenia this month, there's been a lot of rain in Wales, so this might rescue a poor generation quarter. Generation was as follows:

	May (kWhs)	Generation to date (kWhs)
Cwm Gu:	1,260	238,870
Nant yr Hafod:	810	133,520
Blaen Dyar:	1,050	83,210
Abernant:	640	94,810
Cwm Saerbren:	2,780	122,650
Total (5 schemes)	6,540	673,060

Hydro Co-op Member news

This year's AGM of the merged LGV MH Co-operative was held in The Old Rectory Hotel in Llangattock on Monday 24th June and was well-attended. Members had the chance to vote on the motion that there is a return of 10% of capital to all Members and this was passed unanimously. An employee of our advisors Sharenergy commented that 'it is heartening to see such a high level of AGM responsiveness and participation from a group of Members'.

After many years of sterling service, Jackie Charlton has asked to stand down from the Company Secretary role of the hydro Co-op. If you are a Member and might be interested in taking on this role, please email Steve Sharp at hydro@llangattockgreenvalleys.org for more information.

SMART METER INSTALLERS

By Peter Blood

In the discussion at the recent Llangattock Green Valleys workshop it became apparent that the experience of the installation process among those who already have smart meters was rather variable. This issue is of concern to all of us and particularly those who have expressed interest in the Crickhowell Energy Local Club.

In preparation for the rollout of the Club, Energy Local would like to have suggestions from people in the Crickhowell area of local electricians who could be trained as installers, and indeed to hear directly from electricians who may be interested. There will be benefits in a rural area from having installers with knowledge of the local geography.

Please send name and contact information, to include postal address, and any other relevant information to linda@energylocal.co.uk and mary@energylocal.co.uk.



MIDSUMMER MEADOW

By Jackie Charlton

You may have seen some beautiful meadows in the past and the emergence of wildflower verges across the country have shown that people love the midsummer flowers that demonstrate the diverse pattern of wild flowers we have here in the UK.

Sadly, the image here is not of our meadow but it is what we are aspiring to achieve in a few years' time. At the moment our meadow is grazed twice a year by sheep and the hay taken, usually by now, for stock feed. This year, harvesting has been delayed due to the wet weather we've experienced.



We have had our meadow soil analysed and have done some other research which confirms we need to do more to encourage greater wildflower diversity. So, this year we will be introducing Yellow Rattle (*left*) as an organic way to reduce the amount of grass and increase space for wild flowers. It's a long term solution but the meadow you see in the picture above was just grass in 2012. Four years later, after Yellow Rattle was introduced, alongside careful management, it looked very different with a stunning array of wild flowers.

<http://www.wildflowersuk.com/blog/using-yellow-rattle-to-control-grass-growth/>

MOTHS IN OUR WOODLAND ~ Orange Footman / *Eilema soroscula*

Over the 3 years we have been managing the Alder Carr, one of our volunteers has been measuring the moth and butterfly activity by regular trapping and recording the data for use by a UK-wide data resource network.

In late May he came across a moth that has only been recorded locally on a couple of occasions, the *Eilema*

soroscula, more commonly known as the orange footman. This moth isn't that rare nationally but it is not widely distributed.



Here are some facts about this special little moth. The *Eilema sorsula* has one generation with a flight season of late May to June. They feed on lichen growing on Oak, Beech and other trees in mature woodlands. It's a resident and suspected immigrant species found mainly in Southern and SE England, East Anglia and up into the Midlands, as well as in coastal areas of South and West Wales. It was first caught in the County of Brecknock in 2017 at Llangorse and subsequently in 2018 at The Legar. This year's recorded sighting in the Alder Carr meadow/wood in Llangattock is the third. One was also caught in Llanwenarth, Monmouthshire in 2015. The total moth species count to date in the Alder Carr site is 291, which is pretty impressive, and we are expecting that this figure will steadily increase over the next few years depending on intensity of trapping.



BOB'S BEE NOTES ~ JUNE



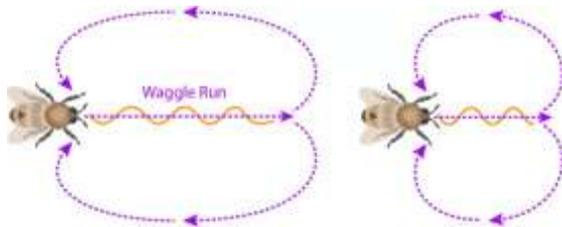
June is the second of the main two months for bees to swarm, so more about it this month. This year "Flaming June" has still to happen but I see the long term forecast is saying we are going to get a warm end to the month, which is good for the bees as well as ourselves. We could do with a new colony in Llangattock as one of our hives swarmed early in May.

I am expecting there to be another lot of swarms about again soon as colonies have been restricted from foraging during these cool, wet conditions causing the brood nests to become overcrowded. This can be another of the triggers to send signals to the "hive mind" that they are wealthy with stores and bees so it is a good time to start another nest away from the existing site. Once the signal is given, some of the fertilised eggs that have just hatched are fed enriched brood food that we call Royal Jelly, that will then change the anatomy of those larvae from worker bees to virgin Queens.



Wild swarm found in The Old Rectory shed in Llangattock

There can be anything from 5 to 25 of these Queen cells in a hive, each cell housing a potential new Queen to head a colony after she has mated with several drones over the few weeks after emergence, flying to what are known as "Drone congregations" where the mating usually takes place. The Queen cell is capped over 4 days after the egg has hatched into a larva and that is usually the day the old Queen follows the swarming bees out of the hive, to hang in a cluster within sight of the hive (there was a photo of a Queen Cell in May's newsletter).



After the swarm has settled into a cluster, the bees that have been looking for potential new hive sites will waggle dance the directions on the outside of it. Other bees will investigate those sites and eventually one is selected and the swarm takes off to its new home.

Back in the original hive, the Queen cells will continue to mature for another eight days until the first Virgin Queen emerges 16 days after the egg was laid. This is where the Virgin Queen's special barbless sting can get used to kill her siblings that are still inside their cells. Virgins Queens are quite capable of achieving a 'cast', that is each Virgin Queen will leave the hive with worker bees to start another colony; each time this happens the number of workers leaving with each cast gets less until the last casts only have a handful of workers that are not viable as a colony. The Virgin Queens will still need to mate and often these casts are collected by beekeepers only to find them gone the next day as the Queen goes on her way, looking for the Drone congregations elsewhere, where mating takes place. I hope these notes will help add some interesting facts to last month's swarm in May notes and show how bees continue to fascinate.

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

LACAS - THE BIG LUNCH GET-TOGETHER

By Sue Cartlidge



Almost twenty brave souls managed to attend this year's [Big Lunch](#) on the allotment site. Everyone brought their favourite dish to share, the barbeque was fired up, the cider was poured and a very good and chatty time was had by all – apart from the fact that the weather was not that welcoming, which probably put some people off coming. What a shame, you missed a

good do! But we didn't get all that wet as we sheltered in our marquee – which did get very wet. Moreover, the day was a few days after the tenth anniversary of the allotments coming into existence, so three cheers were cheered for LACAS and the Llangattock Community Council.



Everything on the plots is now growing like mad, including the weeds. The annual plot inspection has been held by the Committee (if a member is not cultivating their plot then they are asked to make way for someone who will make use of the ground), the field has been mowed a number of times already and the chickens are thriving and laying well.

We do have a short waiting list for plots but if you are interested in growing your own, then do contact Teresa Henderson: thstar@outlook.com. The next date for your diary will be the Summer Show (which includes the ever popular dog show) on Saturday 7th September.

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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](#).

Now that we have 5 hydro schemes up and running, we'd also like to get a few more volunteers involved in monitoring the 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.