



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 105
July 2019

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

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

By Steve Sharp

Hydro scheme update

I had a 5.30pm phone call recently from someone who worked for the Liberal Democrats, asking if I could show a couple of their politicians around one of our hydro schemes the following morning. There's a local by-election due in a week and a Lib Dem party leadership contest ongoing [STOP PRESS: Jo Swinson was elected UK Lib Dem leader] at Westminster, so politics is in the air.

Fellow LGV director Simon Walter and I met local candidate Jane Dodds, the party leader in Wales, and UK Lib Dem leadership candidate Ed Davey at 9am at a local farm. I don't think they were quite prepared for the trek up to the turbine house, which involved clambering over a barbed-wire fence, jumping across a stream and then walking up a path covered in nettles and brambles, but they made it unscathed and we assembled in the turbine house.

The scheme wasn't operating as this month has been very dry but Simon started the scheme up for a short time with water which remained in the 1.3 km penstock pipe. We then discussed LGV, global warming, local environmental issues and the demise of the UK hydro industry due to Feed-in Tariff cuts. Ed Davey was former Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change in the coalition government and so clearly knew the subject well but I got the impression that they were both keen to discuss the issues and listen to some of the problems faced by small community organisations such as ours. They stayed for about an hour before being whisked off to more places on the local campaign trail, including some retail outlets in Crickhowell. Here are a couple of photos from the visit:



June had more than the average annual rainfall in Wales at 94mm (compared with only 6mm last year) and so the hydros generated a decent amount of electricity. Generation was as follows:

	June (kWhs)	Total generation to date (kWhs)
Cwm Gu:	7,420	246,290
Nant yr Hafod:	2,620	136,140
Blaen Dyar:	3,770	86,980
Abernant:	2,890	97,920
Cwm Saerbren:	4,250	127,160
Total (5 schemes)	20,950	694,490

Hydro Co-op Member request

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.



JULY IS PLAYTIME

Llangattock Church in Wales Primary School had the annual Eco Club picnic in the Alder Carr woodland and meadow this month. The Eco Club is an important part of the school activities and children have been coming to our woodland for three years now. Some of them will be going on to the next part on their education journey by moving up to Crickhowell High School, where hopefully they will continue to engage in environmental activity and come back to us.



Woodland Trust Tree Charter Champions



Llangattock Community Woodlands has been approved as Tree Charter Champions again, to take forward the great Tree Charter agenda for the Woodland Trust. After a meeting in Crickhowell with the Tree Charter Team, Llangattock Community Woodlands appreciated the confidence that the Woodland Trust have put in our organisation to help them take forward the great objectives of the Tree Charter. Our next big project for the Tree Charter is planting 400 trees on 30th November. This is an ambitious target in one day but that's what we plan to do!



Trees, Woods and People sets out the principles for a society in which people and trees can stand stronger together. The Tree Charter was launched in Lincoln Castle on 6th November 2017, the 800th anniversary of the 1217 Charter of the Forest. The Tree Charter is rooted in more than 60,000 'tree stories' gathered from people of all backgrounds across the UK.



Bob Bee notes for July 2019

A swarm in July is not worth a fly

We are past the midyear point for bees and a swarm leaving its hive now would be very lucky to survive. Llangattock has had two wild colonies needing re-homing this year, both were in cavity walls of sheds with their entrance facing away from the shed door, so not immediately noticeable or causing a problem to anyone. I have managed to get some photos of the latest colony as we were digging the wild honey comb out of the cavity. To save the colony, we use elastic bands fixing as much brood comb as we can into the frames to



This picture shows how the bees are gathered together and will be moved in the sheet.

be hung in the 'nuc' (i.e. a nucleus hive). The bees are collected and added to the nuc that is put in the close vicinity of where the colony entrance was, so any flying bees will be able to find the queen in the nuc. We have to work quickly as all the bees should be inside the nuc once darkness has fallen. Wrapping a sheet around the box will

help take any stragglers along as well. The nuc is moved at least two miles away, preferably three miles in order to re-establish its new foraging area. To discourage another swarm from making its home in the cavity, a strong smelling paint is used; when it was available, the favourite was creosote!!!

Talking with my beekeeping friends in Wiltshire last week I was informed that this year many of the new queens were not mated, causing them to become 'drone layers'. All the eggs in queens' ovaries are male and when those eggs are fertilized with semen that is stored by the queen in her spermatheca, (after her mating during the first three weeks of life), they become female worker bees, whilst the unfertilized eggs become male worker bees or drones.

If a queen is not able to mate for some reason, all the eggs she lays are drones, i.e. male, and when laid in worker cells have an extended length and the brood pattern is patchy. The colony is doomed when this happens, so beekeepers throw the bees in front of another hive that has a laying queen and destroy the affected brood. I also found this 'drone laying' in one of the nucs I made up a month ago, so they are now begging to be let into another hive.

This is usually the month that we start thinking about extracting surplus honey from the super frames on our colonies. This year, most colonies I have seen have little or no honey to extract so far but have strong colonies to take advantage of a late nectar flow from flowers around Llangattock. In just two or three weeks the Ling heather will be in blossom, so that might be our main honey crop this year.

On behalf of Bob the Bee

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 do get in touch.

Please email Eric Gower eric.gower@gmail.com for a membership form.

www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org

[@LGVcic](#)

[Facebook](#)

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.