



# Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

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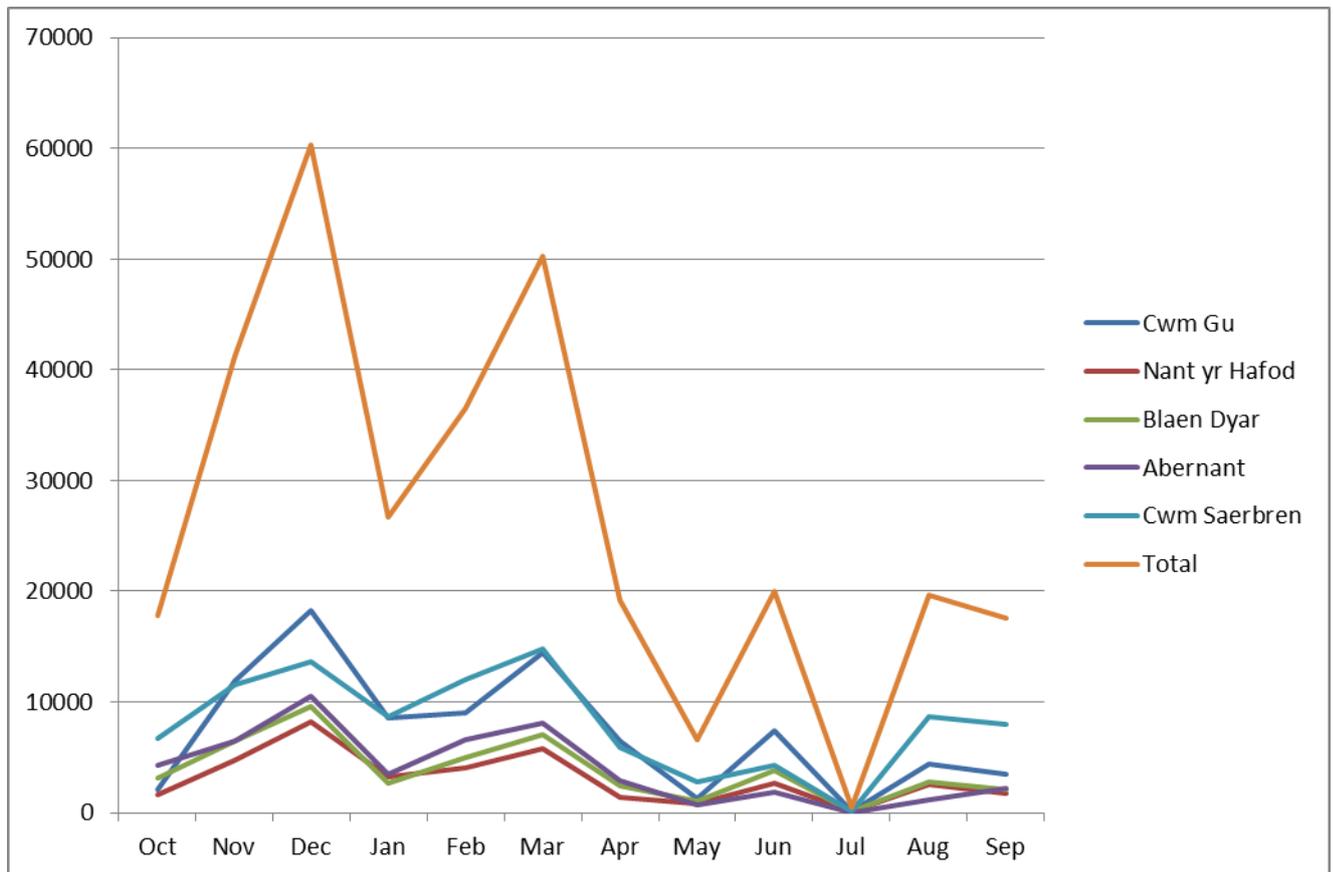
<http://www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org/>

## ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS

By Steve Sharp

### Hydro scheme update

September rainfall (103mm locally) was similar to August and fairly typical for this time of year in the UK. Below is a graph of the electricity generation (kWhs) per hydro scheme and the total for our five schemes from October 2018 to September 2019.



Abernant and Cwm Saerbren are approximately 30 miles away from the other three schemes and so will have experienced slightly different patterns of rainfall during the year. July was by far the driest month, with hardly any rainfall and therefore generation, whereas March and last December had the highest generation.



## Wood deliveries come in long lengths too!

By Jackie Charlton

Along with our normal wood deliveries this month we have included Hazel bean poles and Hazel for hurdles too. [Hinterlands](#) are using the Hazel hurdles to frame different types of hurdles around the site, thereby teaching people how to make hurdles too. This is a national arts programme run by our partners Canal & River Trust, inviting communities to explore canals as a creative space. They have workshops all through the autumn. For more information contact Melissa on [melissa.appleton@canalrivertrust.org.uk](mailto:melissa.appleton@canalrivertrust.org.uk).



Hazel lengths for Hinterlands Project



Our wood deliveries go out every week now and stocks are getting low, although we are still processing logs. This particular load went out with Hazel bean poles which are far more attractive than bamboo and much more sustainable, travelling to this customer who lives just ½ mile down the road from our site. Hopefully the customer will be pleased.

## Wild Flower Meadow Starter Yellow Rattle

We promised ourselves a wild flower meadow when we took it over from Canal & River Trust nearly 3 years ago. Well, we have started the process by blocking off a 10-metre square in the middle of the meadow to sow Yellow Rattle, which is great as a parasite plant for rye grass. We have to do this as the sheep are due in anytime now for grazing and we particularly want to measure growth here, to see the results. Next year we will get specialist wild flowers and sow on top, enabling us to watch and measure results. The wire is now on but we're still waiting for the sheep. The meadow has been grazed for two years running now and the grass has been cut for silage twice, which collectively helps to improve the success rate for all wild flowers.



The 10 metre square pen for Yellow Rattle



Rhinanthus minor, the yellow rattle, little yellow rattle, hayrattle or cockscomb, is a flowering plant in the genus *Rhinanthus* in the family Orobanchaceae, native to Europe, northern North America and Western Asia.

## Apple Day 20 October 2019



We had a great afternoon, pressing apples and catching up on local news, finding out about other groups and going home with apple juice. Not as many visitors as last year but the weather was not quite as good.



Bob's presses worked really well and no electricity was needed here either. We managed to get in the region of 80 litres of apple juice all told, eat lots of sausages with onion and apple sauce and of course the Dorset Apple Cake went down well too.



### Bob's Bee Notes ~ October 2019



Any supplementary feeding of sugar syrup to our bees should have finished by this time of year. The sugar syrup is placed at the top of the hives and the bees almost swim in the sugar bath prepared for them. The bees need to prepare themselves for the colder weather by building up on energy stores this way and then storing excess energy onto the frames in the hives. When they store food into the frames ready for winter, they allow water to evaporate from the feed down to about an 18% moisture level and then they cap over the cell with beeswax to stop fermentation of the stores. Some of my colonies and those in the woodland were given bags of fondant last month as well and have already eaten what was meant for emergency feeding. The fondant is not stored by the bees and has low moisture content. We would normally put the fondant bags above the crown board holes sometime in the autumn, after the ivy and Michaelmas daisies have finished flowering. It is done at that time so, if the temperatures are still warm enough within the hive and the bees are not yet in a tight winter cluster, they can munch away at the sugar for energy needed for producing heat for the bees when they cluster together. The bees vibrate their thoracic wing muscles that then give off heat and they also do this when producing beeswax for cell building and capping stores by clinging together in clusters.



Half empty fondant on the crown board

I have been talking to other beekeepers to see whether the Queens in their hives are still laying eggs. So far, all the hives I have access to have no open brood on frames so there are no young for the bees to feed. This means the Queens finished laying eggs about a month sooner than I would have expected, which seems to be a common feature this year in Llangattock. It might mean another difficult bee season ahead, with fewer bees coming through the winter months, although on good weather days I have seen lots of ivy pollen being taken into the hives and that is usually a sign that the Queens are still in lay.

We check our bees through the winter without opening the hives by examining the debris boards. This enables us to see how many adult varroa mites have died from old age and if any immature, partly-formed mites are present that come from brood cells recently opened. It also means we can treat the bees later on, when the weather starts to warm up, against infestation of varroa. We have been successful in our low maintenance, simple organic cleansing of icing sugar dusting on to the bees. They like the sugar and when they shake their legs and wings, the varroa falls to the debris board.

We celebrated National Apple Day on the 20<sup>th</sup> October when those who came were able to see the beehives attached to our site and get involved in apple pressing in the Alder Carr woodland.



## **Bee Training Course**

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> October for six weeks**

Llangattock Village Hall  
7:00pm to 9:00pm

£20 for the course with practical mead making at the end.



**To book, please contact Bob Needs:**

**07442 017486 [beesneeds@btinternet.com](mailto:beesneeds@btinternet.com)**

Slide presentation

Beeswax products

Microscopes available for a closer look

Equipment assembly for hives explained with practical hands- on  
fun

This course is a great opportunity to meet other like-minded individuals interested in keeping bees. You don't have to want a hive or keep bees but a keen interest in their lives, how they work together, how bee keepers manage the hives and other interesting facts are all covered by this short course.

***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](http://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](mailto:eric.gower@gmail.com) for a membership form.

## LACAS

By Sue Cartlidge

### Date for your diary:

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November

LACAS “No-Fireworks Bonfire Night”.

We will be building the bonfire from 2.30 in the afternoon – it’s important not to just set light to the heap of dead wood and rubbish where it is standing just now, mainly because of wildlife possibly having made their homes in the pile over the summer but also you never know what might have been abandoned in there!



All are welcome – the barbeque will be lit, there will be soup and various other lovely things to eat and, if we are very lucky, there may even be some of Bob’s very special cider.

We have two half plots available at present with no waiting list, so do contact me, Sue Cartlidge on [llangattockallotments@gmail.com](mailto:llangattockallotments@gmail.com) if you are interested in growing your own fruit and veggies. However, we do ask you to sign a Membership Tenancy Agreement which has various requirements – one of which is to attend Work Days to help maintain the site as LACAS has been a community project from its beginnings ten years ago.

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:admin@llangattockgreenvalleys.org).

[www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org](http://www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org)

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