



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 77
December 2016

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

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

By Steve Sharp

Hydro – MH-1 and MH-2 updates:

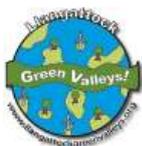
Cwm Gu (MH-1) finally began generating again at the end of November, after about 6 mostly dry months which saw no generation at all. However, the significant winter rains we had last year at this time haven't arrived yet and so the total generation figure for Cwm Gu at the end of November was only about 72,000 kWh.

Our construction company TGVH is continuing to gauge the water flow at the intake of Cwm Gu, in preparation for applying to NRW for an adjustment to the HoF notch height, so that we can take more water from this stream.

Everything is now in place to start construction at Blaen Dyar and we now expect this to be the beginning of 2017.

In MH-2, there was again a small amount of generation at Nant yr Hafod last month and the total generation figure at the month end was just under 50,000 kWh.

Steve Sharp and Andrew Fryer met with our partners WToW recently, at the Cwm Saerbren scheme site, to see the new storage area which will be used during the construction period and to sign a wider-ranging partnership agreement between our two organisations. We are still waiting to finalise the NRW landowner lease and for this to be signed off by a Welsh Minister but everything else is in place to start the build of this scheme, which we envisage will commence in a few months' time.



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



LLANGATTOCK COMMUNITY WOODLANDS

By Jackie Charlton and Bob Needs



Working with Canal & River Trust

This month we have started a project with Canal & River Trust whilst the new lining and upgrading of the canal is taking place in Llangattock. CRT planned, as part of their commitment to the environment, a work programme for coppicing hazel from Llangynidr to Gilwern. Sixty six trees have been marked along this stretch and will require work to be undertaken over the winter months. That's a lot of coppice work, which is quite technical and can be very challenging either with hand tools or a chain saw. Over the last 4 weeks, 18 trees have been coppiced and we are using the wood for fuel, long poles and hopefully to do some basic hurdle making. The important element here though is the benefit of coppicing for the tree and the environment (see some background information at <http://www.coppice.org.uk/background.htm>). Trees are excellent at sequestering carbon from the atmosphere and retaining it for long periods in their wood and soil and this action is much more active in new growth. Environmentalists and woodland organisations recognize the importance of this ancient form of woodland management, too.

Facts about Hazel Coppice

- Coppicing is the oldest form of forestry; woven hazel screens used for fishing have been dated back to 5,000 BC
- Much of the South East of England's ancient semi-natural woodland has developed under the coppice management system
- Hazel coppice products were an indispensable part of the rural economy
- Coppice work is labour-intensive, employing ten times more labour than modern forestry systems
- Hazel coppice is a renewable source of wood
- There are at least 400 gifted craftsmen working in the coppiced woodlands of Great Britain
- Good quality hazel coppice is a viable economic crop
- Coppicing can offer rural employment
- Coppicing is clean, quiet and environmentally friendly.



I wouldn't suggest our volunteers are part of the 400 'gifted craftsman' but we do our best and achieve great things for the environment as a result of this type of woodland management.

If you would like to come along as a volunteer and find out more about charcoal making, bee keeping, moth surveys, wood processing or woodcrafts, please e mail huw.lloyd@hotmail.co.uk. We meet every Tuesday and you can find information on

where and when we meet on our website www.lcwg.btck.co.uk.



The Woodland Trust was so impressed with all our tree stories and the way they have been collected that they have asked for LCW to write a BLOG!! This will be shared across the UK and will

help to put our group on the map. If you have a tree story you can send it to me on jackiecharltonlgv@gmail.com.



Bee notes for December

Why would anyone be interested in looking at their bees during December? There are no flowers about and it's far too cold! Well, here's a thing, it's the 13th of December, bees were flying and pollen was being taken into the hives, so there are flowers in bloom and it's not too cold. These mild days in the depth of winter are not a new thing, well at least not over the last decade or so. For years I have been giving my bees a slab of fondant (rather like icing we have on cakes) especially formulated for bees using sugars they would naturally find in nectar from flowers. I do that so the bees moving about inside the hive have something other than their stored honey to eat.

Monitoring each hive for Varroa population (a parasitic mite that attacks the honey bees) and the state of lay of the Queen bee is an important activity now. By inspecting a white, plastic insert that is placed under the open mesh floor of the hive, it is possible to read what is happening inside just by examining the debris on the insert. The annual Varroa life cycle has to be understood, of course, because they are about all year and are the cause of most virus problems when their numbers get out of hand. Once the interpretation of the debris has been mastered, most beekeepers can say with some confidence what the approximate Varroa population is and if the Queen bee is in lay. When we know these things, we can keep the Varroa population low and so help the bees to survive. We know eight days after the Queen bee has laid her last egg, there will not be any open cells containing larvae in which the adult Varroa mite can hide and lay her own eggs. The beekeeper can take advantage of this situation and 'dust' (sprinkle icing sugar over the bees), which helps to remove any Varroa that are not inside sealed bee cells. This 'dusting' has the effect of making the bees preen the icing sugar from their body hairs and remove Varroa that are attached to them, they then fall through the mesh that is on the floor of the hive and onto the plastic insert. The insert is removed about once a week, inspected, cleaned and then re-inserted.

The Bee Group spent a day processing the beeswax we have collected throughout this last season. Five of us got together at "Herons Rest" last Saturday and made several batches of beeswax that was cast into different shaped moulds for Christmas tree decorations and candles. The smell of the warm beeswax is one to savour and a lovely activity to do at this time of year.



Now would be a good time to drop hints about what bee book you haven't yet got in your library. I suggest, "Bees and honey" by Ted Hooper.

Happy Christmas from Bee Bob



LCW Trustees are justly proud of the commitment and enthusiasm of all our volunteers. If you are interested in environmental management, green wood crafts or bee keeping then please do get in touch. Visit our website lcwg.btck.co.uk or email Eric Gower eric.gower@gmail.com for a membership form.

Llangattock Area Community Allotment Society

By Odette Wills

PLOTS AVAILABLE NOW

Fancy growing your own fruit and vegetables in beautiful surroundings?

Call Phil on 01873 811537 or 07977 731309 or email gibsons@uwclub.net for more information or to come and view.



A sample of the produce grown on Plot 5 in 2016

UPCOMING EVENTS

There will be a group working day on Saturday 7th January 2017 and apple pruning later in the New Year (date TBC), a perfect chance to meet fellow allotment holders and an opportunity to learn new skills.

LLANGATTOCK LITTER PICKERS

By Pete Bates, Rollo Lewis and Michael Butterfield

Please follow these links for our most recent news:

- Newsletter December 2016
- Llangattock Litter Pickers Supporters Club

COMMUNITY RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Eleanor Sullivan and I am a student at Cardiff University studying for a Masters in Spatial Planning and Development. I am currently in the process of completing my dissertation which is the last stage of my degree.

I have decided to base my dissertation on community renewable energy projects, and more specifically the barriers/issues that they face, both practically and politically. This will then enable me to assess whether these barriers can be overcome, to allow community renewable energy projects to be scaled up, and reduce energy consumption in a sustainable and achievable way across the UK.

I would be very grateful if you could take the time to complete a short questionnaire, which will form part of the data for this dissertation. To fill in a questionnaire, please use the following link: <https://goo.gl/forms/9NypXE1YExC5bS7B3>

The survey is anonymous and will take no longer than 5 minutes to complete. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me using the following email address: sullivanef@cardiff.ac.uk

Thank you for your assistance.

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.



To find out more about us and to become a member,

please visit www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org

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