



# Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 91  
March 2018

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

---

## ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

By Steve Sharp

February produced a fair amount of rain, snow and freezing temperatures locally, which tested our monitoring equipment and meant our volunteers weren't able to get to some of our schemes for a week, but overall it was another decent month of electricity generation.

Total generation in kWhs at the end of February was approximately:

Cwm Gu:	132,225
Nant yr Hafod:	89,674
Blaen Dyar:	25,324
Abernant:	31,630
Cwm Saerbren:	3,000

A major regional power failure in the Clydach Gorge area halted operation of both our schemes there (Blaen Dyar and Nant yr Hafod) this month. This affected generation to some extent and also knocked out the video monitoring system.

OFGEM has agreed the FITs conversion for Cwm Saerbren and we have applied to get the scheme registered for FITs payments with our electricity company Ecotricity. At the scheme, our partners Welcome to our Woods have been getting to grips with monitoring and recording data from the scheme. There is still some snagging work to be carried out but the ground has been too wet for some of the remaining jobs to be completed.

## Blaen Dyar Artists in Residence

By [Leona Jones](#) and [Penny Hallas](#)

The opening of the **re:Source** exhibition is fast approaching, and the past few weeks have been time of intense activity as the project enters its final stages. Penny and Leona have been honing visuals and audio for the past several weeks, and have now completed the final draft of the work. They'll be trying it out in situ at CRiC Studio in the near future, and the final tweaks will then bring the work to completion.

Penny and Jackie's walk at the Blaen Dyar site as part of the Crickhowell Walking Festival was highly successful, with a full complement of walkers enjoying the experience. Feedback confirmed people appreciated the chance to learn more about micro-hydro and acknowledged the leaders' thorough preparation beforehand. Rod unexpectedly appearing to take readings in the turbine house had many thinking his appearance was cleverly stage-managed!



*Image by Rob Lloyd*

The walk will be repeated on 21st April, with a few additions and changes. Light refreshments will be available after the walk in Clydach Community Hall and full booking details are on the artists-in-residence page of the website.

LGV volunteers will also be engaging with the public at the Tourist Information Office on 21<sup>st</sup> April, where Leona will be based all day. It's intended a video will be playing as a means of illustrating the hydro scheme construction process. People will be directed to the exhibition from there and anyone visiting the exhibition will be told about the chance to talk about the project and micro-hydro in Tourist Information.

Publicity posters and postcards in Welsh and English have been collected from the printers and have begun to be distributed. If you know of any outlets for them, please do contact Sue for copies.

Finally, the Launch Evening preparations, being co-ordinated by Sue, are also well underway. Taking place 6.30 pm – 8.30 pm on 14<sup>th</sup> April in the Latte Da café, all are welcome to be one of the first to visit the installation and enjoy an evening of relaxed chat and refreshments.

[Leona Jones](#) and [Penny Hallas](#)



Supported by the [Sustainable Development Fund – Brecon Beacons National Park Authority](#).



LGV and the artists have received an investment from [A&B Cymru's CultureStep](#) to strengthen and develop their creative partnership.



## Cancelled event but Alder Sprite has arrived

By Jackie Charlton



We thought that 18 March was Spring, until the “Beast from the East” showed up again. Pete Fowler, artist with Peak (formally Arts Alive) in Crickhowell, finished off the Alder Sprite ready for the showcase event on the 18 March, which was to be a fun and creative play time for families. Sadly the event couldn’t take place but the Alder Sprite is painted on the POD in our woodland and looks stunning.

The event was meant to be a creative writing and drawing workshop with Pete Fowler and Emma Beynon, to celebrate Pete Fowler’s Totemic exhibition at Peak in the Llangattock woods, to forage through the understory for inspiration. The children and their families would have explored the woodland to create poems and stories about the Beasts of the Black Mountains, including our very own Alder Sprite. I am sure we will be inviting Peak to do something like this later in the Spring, to make up for the lost day to the “Beast from the East”.

During 2018, LCW are hoping to put on other events to open up the woodland and meadow to the community. As a result, the Canal & River Trust is putting the group forward for a special Community Award in a list of volunteer awards to be presented later this year. It is a big compliment for our volunteers who have been working to make sure our site is accessible and open. As a result, our big fund-raising development is to get a disabled compost toilet and provide access for all to the site. An ‘Awards for All’ application is being prepared during the Spring which will hopefully enable us to build the toilet and lay the access material before Autumn sets in.



*Image: Snow on our next year log stock, taken on 18 March 2018*



## Alder Carr Lottery

### FIRST DRAW STILL TAKING PLACE AT THE END OF MARCH!

Llangattock Community Woodlands have been advertising the Alder Carr Lottery for several months now and would really like to see more members. For more information please contact [jackiecharltonlgv@gmail.com](mailto:jackiecharltonlgv@gmail.com) or [andrewgpeach@gmail.com](mailto:andrewgpeach@gmail.com).

Website Go to <http://llangattockwoods.org.uk>

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



### Bob's Bee Notes – March

Queens should have been near to being in full lay now, from just a few hundred eggs a day at the end of last month, to laying several hundred a day this month. In usual circumstances the number of eggs laid will depend on the amount of pollen being brought into the hive and foraging daylight hours. But weather conditions have meant that there has been a stop start situation to spring flowers and any pollen. But!!! As the weather gets milder, these New Year bees will be the Queen's workforce, producing brood food from their glands to feed the newly hatched larvae. If the older winter bees born last year are able to collect water, they will use it to dilute the honey they stored in the brood box. Last week the bees were working pollen source flowers, the last of the snowdrops, Sarcococca and Crocus. The older of last year bees will be dying off, which means the new workforce will need to take over both the foraging and nursing jobs, keeping the brood warm day and night. The start of this month was a shock to us all after the recent mild winters and we should be prepared for heavy colony losses this Spring. All the beekeeper can do for the bees at this time of year is keep an eye on the fondant packs above the cluster, to see they have enough, and continue monitoring the board under the mesh floor for Varroa mite activity.

Most of the local hives I know of have young Queens, so we will need to keep a close eye in April and May to see if swarming preparations are underway. To lose a swarm with a young Queen will mean a smaller or non-existent honey crop in that year and after last year, when we had very little honey, we don't want that. These last four consecutive years have been the worst for honey production I can remember. Is it climate change, bad luck, bad beekeeping, or some other thing that we may hear about some time in the future? Our native honey bee (*Apis Mellifera Mellifera*) should be able to withstand these unusual weather patterns, as this bee has evolved in Northern Europe since the last ice age. Queen bees not from this part of the world are continually imported because beekeepers read of the success in the land where they have evolved, not realising they don't do well over here with our variable winters and summers. The drones from these colonies mate with our local Queens and we end up with mongrel bees and all that goes with that.

I take the opportunity of the lull in hive activity at this time of year to repair or make new bee equipment, in readiness for the coming season that usually takes off with a rush when we get good spring weather. Let's hope we see some of that in April. That's all for this month; perhaps there will be more news about hive activity next month.



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](#).

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

**The trees in the orchard** have received a light formative pruning – they are still only 8–9 years old and so just need gentle guidance. Our “Orchard Manager” Sue has recently attended a course on Orchard Management with Les Davies ([www.westcountryman.co.uk](http://www.westcountryman.co.uk)) – highly recommended. She is now confidently inspired to take on the pruning and grafting tasks as well as introduce some wild flowers and a woodpile into the orchard to help with biodiversity. Hopefully the bees will benefit too.

**A load of old rubbish:** At the end of the winter there always seems to be a collection of rubbish that has blown down the field and collected in the hedge – mainly plastic. Now that China is no longer taking the UK’s plastic waste for recycling – any offers? (see picture below).



Like carrier bags, plastic pots have become a huge waste problem, many of them ending up in landfill or in our hedge! A useful way to avoid using plastic pots when planting seeds is to use the cardboard insides of loo rolls as long root trainers for plants such as peas, beans and sweet peas. Once the plants have been in the ground for a while, the cardboard should eventually break down in the soil. You can also buy, at greater expense, biodegradable pots made from a range of materials such as coir, wood chips, rice husks and even seaweed that will all rot down in the soil.

Did you know:

- Worldwide we produce 20 times more plastic than we did 50 years ago.
- Plastics make up over 7 per cent of the average household dustbin in the UK.

**New members:** LACAS has recently welcomed several new members, one of whom described her new plot as “a spot to ponder, get my hands dirty, make my mark, cultivate connections, cross pollinate”. And there’s also the benefit of the delicious edibles too! Another new allotmenteer used to grow vegetables but unfortunately the number of cars in his family also grew and a driveway was needed, depriving him of his veggie patch. He was very excited to learn that Llangattock had some free plots and has started work right away, looking forward to the pleasure of veg growing again.

There’s still one plot available for this year – if you are interested, contact Phil Gibson on 01873-811537 or [gibsons@uwclub.net](mailto:gibsons@uwclub.net)



## **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 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).

## **PLEASE ASK US!**

If anybody would like to look at LGV’s finances or discuss our schemes and projects, please contact us and we will be 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](http://www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org)

Follow us on Twitter! [@LGVcic](https://twitter.com/LGVcic) and

Like and share our [LGV Facebook Page](#)