



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

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

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS:

By Steve Sharp

Hydro – MH-1 and MH-2 updates:

There was no generation at Cwm Gu in the last quarter. However, it's worth noting that almost 90% of this scheme's generation occurred in the four months from November to February last winter, so we are looking forward to a rainy, wet, thundery and drizzly few months ahead. Now that we have a year's rainfall and generation data for Cwm Gu, we have made some initial enquires about applying to raise the height of the hands-off flow notch for this scheme, which would increase the volume of water flowing through the penstock and therefore the annual generation.

The solicitors dealing with the Blaen Dyar Agreement and Storage and Access Licence have found another issue to delay the start of this scheme but we are in daily contact with them and are ever hopeful of a resolution and start date.

There was some small but steady generation at Nant yr Hafod last month and the total generation figure at the month end was 46,735 kWh.

The landowner lease is being drawn up for the Cwm Saerbren scheme, in liaison with NRW. Because of the significant cuts in FIT rates during the last year, the rate we were able to secure for this scheme was less than half that of the other LGV schemes but we have managed to negotiate a lower rent with NRW as a result.

Finance Director role:

We are still looking for a new Finance Director. If you have finance experience and might be interested in taking on the role from Mike, please contact Steve Sharp on stevesharp.lgv@btinternet.com for more information.



LGV VOLUNTEERS NEEDED PLEASE! CAN YOU HELP?

In addition to the new Finance Director role, 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

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.



LLANGATTOCK COMMUNITY WOODLANDS

By Jackie Charlton and Bob Needs



It has been a very busy month for LCW moving onto the new site in Llangattock and beginning to clear ready to bring in the bees during November, getting a stock fence built on the edge of the meadow to protect the wood and finally providing a shelter for volunteers where we can eat our sausages. Yes, those sausages are still sizzling and a very important part of our weekly activity. We are looking for a name for this woodland and meadow as we can't keep calling it CRT woodland now. If you have

any suggestions, please let us know, as we are about to erect some signs and banners.

This month we had a visit from Mark Robinson the Canal and River Trust's national ecologist together with a representative who is overseeing a big project funded by the Welsh Government to improve the canal side for both visitors and local communities. Mark is particularly pleased that we now have a 10 year lease agreement for this important woodland and meadow and has shown confidence in our ability to ensure the woodland and meadow habitats are improved for biodiversity, positively impacting on both flora and fauna.

This wasn't our only visitor either. We now have a project officer helping us to plan the meadow improvements to provide either a wild flower meadow or a hay meadow. This is a long term project probably taking 5 to 6 years to complete. The first bit is to do a soil survey. If the soil is too rich then we have a lot of work to do stripping it back to make it barren enough to allow wild flower growth where many important species will be encouraged using specialist seed from other projects in Powys.



Bob has provided his monthly update and the LCW Honey Pot volunteers were hoping to get some heather honey produced from frames at Jarretts' this month but it was too thick for our inexperienced extractor (me sadly). Moisture was allowed to get into the honey and as soon as that happens the honey becomes tainted and cannot be sold. But we are hoping to bottle up and share with our volunteers for free. One of the real benefits of volunteering!



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 email huw.lloyd@hotmail.co.uk We meet regularly every Tuesday and you can find information on where and when we meet on our website www.lcwg.btck.co.uk



The first 65 Tree Stories for the Woodland Trust Tree Charter project have been sent off ready to be recorded on the national database. If you still want to send me your story please do as I need another 40 or more to get nearer my target. You can send them to me on jackiecharltonlgv@gmail.com



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 www.lcwg.btck.co.uk or email Eric Gower eric.gower@gmail.com for a membership form.



Bee notes for October

At this time of year most nectar and pollen producing flowers have gone past their best, the exception being Ivy which will keep flowering well into October. The bees and other insects are mainly foraging Ivy pollen and nectar to get them ready for the long winter incubation where the protein of the pollen will help keep them alive. If you walk past any Ivy bush you will smell the strong perfume that attracts insects such as bees and wasps.



Some years ago when I was learning to use microscopes for pollen identification and bee anatomy, I was shocked to see what sort of damage Ivy nectar can do to a bee's honey stomach. During the dissection of a bee, I found crystallized nectar looking like shards of glass that had cut through the stomach wall and probably killed the bee. The nectar was easily identified as being Ivy because of the pollen grains in the stomach. The bee was on the floor outside a hive in October and as the bee looked young, (it had a sheen to the body hairs) I had been interested to see what had killed it.

Another time, I was extracting Heather honey that was late coming off the hives for processing in the heather honey press. In order to see if honey in uncapped cells is ready to extract, we shake the frame downwards towards the uncapping area to see if nectar comes out. If this happens the nectar has not been ripened by the bees so it is not honey. As the bees were collecting Ivy nectar at that time I didn't want any mixed in with the heather honey so I did the test and found nectar spots on the work top. I then had to spin the frames in a honey extractor to remove the un-ripened nectar before pressing the honey out of the frames. The following morning I was at the uncapping table and found the nectar spots from the previous evening had crystallized – Ivy has a very high glucose sugar level and sets very quickly and becomes as hard as concrete. I think that this is what had happened to the bee I had found dead; it had been late returning to the hive and had been chilled, crystallizing the nectar in its stomach.

Earlier this week I was walking past the allotment hives about 8am and saw a few bees flying in and out when the temperature was only about 10° centigrade, they were on a flow of some sort probably Ivy even at that time of day and at such a low temperature. The winter bee's metabolism has to be high in fats in order to survive the cold months of winter so they consume more pollen than summer bees to give them the fat bodies needed during winter clustering to protect their queen. As a general rule we say winter bees live six months, summer bees live six weeks. Enjoy your honey.



21 October 2016 National Apple day Llangattock



Llangattock celebrated National apple day by scratting (chopping) and pressing apples from as far afield as The Ffawyddog, The Dardy, Gilwern, and Crickhowell. The event only took place because the week before Jackie Charlton had handed me a pack of National apple day invitation cards and posters. They were great for promoting the apple day events in our area of Wales. As I couldn't find any such events in this area I decided I would try to set one up in Llangattock.

My previous experience of juicing apples had involved using a small manual scrapper and an inefficient press that meant throwing away apple pressings that still contained lots of juice. So I built my own large wooden press last autumn and bought an electric stainless steel scrapper at the same time to speed up the juicing process intending to make local cider, fresh apple juice, and pasteurised apple juice. A manual scrapper and water powered press were loaned for the day by a new cider maker from Crickhowell who also provided several boxes of different apple varieties.

Part of the celebration of apple day involved people bringing along examples of various products made from apples. We had quite a good display on the table starting with a fresh, hot apple pie, crab apple jelly, apple chutney, spiced apple chutney, cider from last year, cider vinegar, pasteurised apple juice, and fresh apple juice produced on the day.

Visitors were able to see how the sugar content of the juice is measured using a hydrometer and how that is recorded on a label when making cider to help estimate the potential alcohol content. I also explained why I had previously made up a yeast starter that is added to the apple juice to make sure the dominant yeast in the cider was the cultured yeast. The pasteuriser was purchased in a sale from a local store last year so had new heat and timing settings recommended by an experienced apple juice producer.

In total there were 20 people that attended over the four hour juicing session using either the electric or manual scrapper and the large wooden press or the smaller water powered press. There was a pleasant sound of chat about apple recipes, juice tastes, unknown varieties in gardens, apples that keep, and apples that rot on the tree. I think it was well worth the effort to celebrate the British apple as all appeared happy with the experience. Perhaps there will be an even better one next year.

Bee Bob

Llangattock Area Community Allotment Society - Bonfire Night

By Sue Cartlidge

For those of you who don't like the noisy bangs and sudden flashes of fireworks, the LACAS Firework-free Bonfire Party will take place on the Allotment Field in Llangattock on 5th November (this year a Saturday) starting at 6.00pm.

There will be a huge bonfire, gallons of home-made soup, home-made toffee, cakes, Llangattock cider and apple juice, and lots more besides. If anyone wants to help with building the bonfire (we have plenty of wood) do please just drop by mid-morning on the day.



If you've been building up your own woodpile for a bonfire in the last few months, do ensure that there are no sleepy hedgehogs making their winter hibernation home in the depths of the woodwork! Should you find a hog or two having made their nest, you need to replace logs and twigs around it and build your bonfire in a different place. If you're unsure what to do, you could contact the Hedgehog Helpline on 07557-646773 and they can advise you on all hedgehog matters.

As it's being held on bonfire night itself, we will probably have a good view of all the fireworks around us - from a distance. Put the date in your diary and see you there! And if by any chance you are looking for an allotment, we do have some available at the moment. Contact Phil Gibson on 01873 811537 or gibsons@uwclub.net

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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