



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:

We finally had a couple of weeks of persistent rain at the beginning of March and so both LGV's operational schemes reached close to maximum generation levels for the first time since February 2016.

The total generation figure for Cwm Gu (MH-1) at the end of the February was around 77,000 kWh and the technical problems seem to have been resolved, so the March figure should show an improvement.

The construction company building Blaen Dyar has had a team working to clear the penstock route of undergrowth and dumped items, including a large mass of steel wire which was lying across the route of the penstock pipe and required four man days to remove with an angle grinder and bolt cutters. Progress has also been delayed slightly by a fallen tree around the intake point, which was straddling the stream and partly blocking a public footpath. Delivery of the penstock pipe is now scheduled for mid-April.



In MH-2, generation at Nant yr Hafod was back close to full capacity for the first half of March, following the resolution of the spear valve and control board problems. The total generation figure at the end of February was about 58,000 kWh.

We are pleased to announce that the construction orders for both the planned MH-2 schemes Cwm Saebren and Abernant have been signed and deposits paid, so construction of both schemes will start within the next 6 months.

Image: Steel wire at Blaen Dyar.



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



Carrying on Coppicing

By Jackie Charlton and Bob Needs

Llangattock Community Woodlands keep on coppicing and will have completed almost all of the work with Canal & River Trust (CRT) by the end of this month. There are some difficult trees which we might not reach but CRT has those covered. This week everything worked as it should, including the engine on the barge. It was a lovely day and we brought back the bacon – well, the hazel anyway. CRT is really pleased with the work we have done and the National Press Officer Joe Coggins said "Llangattock Community Woodlands help us to make some important environmental improvements along the waterway. They're a great example of how different organisations are supporting our work and helping to maintain this amazing canal."



We met Joe when he came along as part of the ITV filming day. The filming was for an ITV Wales series called Beacons Uncovered. It's a four part series, due to air at the end of the summer. The episodes will be based around each of the seasons, so the filming at Llangattock will comprise the winter episode. They wanted to film with the Llangattock Woodland group to demonstrate an example of local people who are helping to improve the Brecon Beacons. They will also be focussing on the canal as one of the key attractions in the Beacons, so the day was a great illustration of the work needed to keep the waterway in good shape.

Alun Jones, ITV Programme Producer, said "Filming in the Brecon Beacons has been great and getting to know about projects such as Llangattock Community Woodlands helps to demonstrate how the landscape is protected and supported by the people who live in it."

The works on the Alder Carr meadow have now been completed, giving us a great working area. This week, 26 primary school children will be helping us plant the 420 whips (very small trees) that we have received from the Woodland Trust "Free Trees for Schools and Communities" www.woodlandtrust.org.uk.

These whips are a mixture of hazel, blackthorn, crab apple, dog rose, elder and wild cherry, part of the wild



harvest group. These will provide a wonderful barrier between the new fence and woodland, as well as providing great biodiversity as the whips grow into small trees. They will also provide pollen for the bees early in the spring and summer.

Look out for this month's Countryfile Magazine, which includes an article about volunteering for health in the countryside, featuring Llangattock volunteers.

ALDER CARR LOTTERY



Llangattock Community Woodlands (LCW) now runs a small lottery which has the potential to raise over £1000 for environmental measures and equipment for LCW each year.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

£4 per month buys you a lottery number – the numbers are entered into an annual draw for a chance to win a cash prize each year. Some of the money generated goes into the prize fund and the rest goes into the woodland fund. **Llangattock Community Woodlands** is run on a voluntary basis and is a charity and company limited by guarantee. All profits will be passed back to the charity. If you would like more information or have a question, please email jackiecharltonlgv@gmail.com or andrewgpeach@gmail.com.

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



Charter
for Trees, Woods
and People

Woodland Charter new project ideas are on the way from the Woodland Trust.



BEE NOTES FOR MARCH

Spring is here. This mild weather has helped to get the early flowers to bloom, providing pollen and nectar that young bees use to feed larvae. Any eggs laid now will become the worker bees collecting nectar in six weeks' time, which also happens to be the time when we see the first swarms emerging from colonies.

Any hives that are not showing activity by now must be opened and inspected to see what has happened. If disease is found or suspected, the frames and boxes should be fumigated and scorched with a blow torch to kill off anything that could cause harm to the next tenants. Old frames can be melted down in boiling rain water to salvage the beeswax that in turn is used to make candles or polish. The beekeeper has to learn how to look for spores of a common disease known as *Nosema Apis* using a compound microscope at x400. This disease was once very common but, in recent years, it has all but disappeared only to be replaced by its sister, *Nosema Ceranae*, a more deadly form of the same disease. If a just surviving spring colony is found to be struggling along, and the Queen is known to be old, then a replacement can be introduced and that will usually change the fortunes of the colony in no time.

Earlier this week, I was walking along a quiet lane when I heard the sound of bees; but for the time of year, it could have been a swarm. I followed the sound and found a willow tree full of pussy willow catkins where the bees were collecting pollen to take back to the hive. Today, the temperature is 14°C so fresh stores will be flooding into the hives again. That influx of fresh food will get the Queen to go into full lay. The fresh stores could also restrict her laying area which in turn could cause overcrowding, especially in three weeks' time when the young bees from today's eggs emerge from their cells as adults. This overcrowding in the brood nest is one of the main causes of swarming. The beekeeper has to be observant to what is going on inside the hive so that extra space can be given before it's too late and the bees have gone into swarming mode. If the hive has a large brood box, the easiest way to give additional space is to add a "super" (honey storage box), where the nectar being collected can be stored. It can also give space for the young wax building bees to work away from the overcrowded brood box. Next month, look out for early swarms.



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 please do get in touch. Visit our website or email Eric Gower eric.gower@gmail.com for a membership form.

LLANGATTOCK AREA COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

By Sue Cartlidge

Why have an allotment?

Recently, LACAS sent a questionnaire about the allotments to all plot holders and, amongst other questions, it asked people why they had an allotment and what they enjoyed about it. As you might imagine, being able to grow organic, seasonal, tasty fruit and vegetables (and flowers too – helps the bees!) was the principle reason.

The social side of allotmenting was also felt to be of huge value – chatting to other plot holders and becoming involved in community events such as Bonfire Night, the Allotment Show and the summer theatre presentations were important to people. This year, for the first time, it's hoped that we will be involved in the Eden Project's Big Lunch on 18th June – watch this space for further news.

Exercise and outdoor activity in the fresh air and sunshine (occasionally!) were vital to some and it was also felt that the allotment was good therapy for physical and mental ailments, providing a space for relaxation and reflection.



Picture: Produce at the LACAS Show last year

The feelings of well-being and satisfaction at being able to produce your own natural, healthy eatables, and then eat them too, pervaded all the answers.

If you would like to take on an allotment for yourself, do contact Phil Gibson on 01873-811537 or 07977-731309 or email gibsons@uwclub.net for further information.

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

LGV's website is in the process of being updated. There are more newsletters available to view, the Q&A and FAQs pages have been amalgamated and the 'Where we are at' section under Hydro is developing into much more of a useful timeline. Information on the home page will be changing regularly, too. There's still more work to do but we hope you find the changes of interest.

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 or to become a member,

please visit:

www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org

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