



Llangattock Green Valleys newsletter

Issue 116
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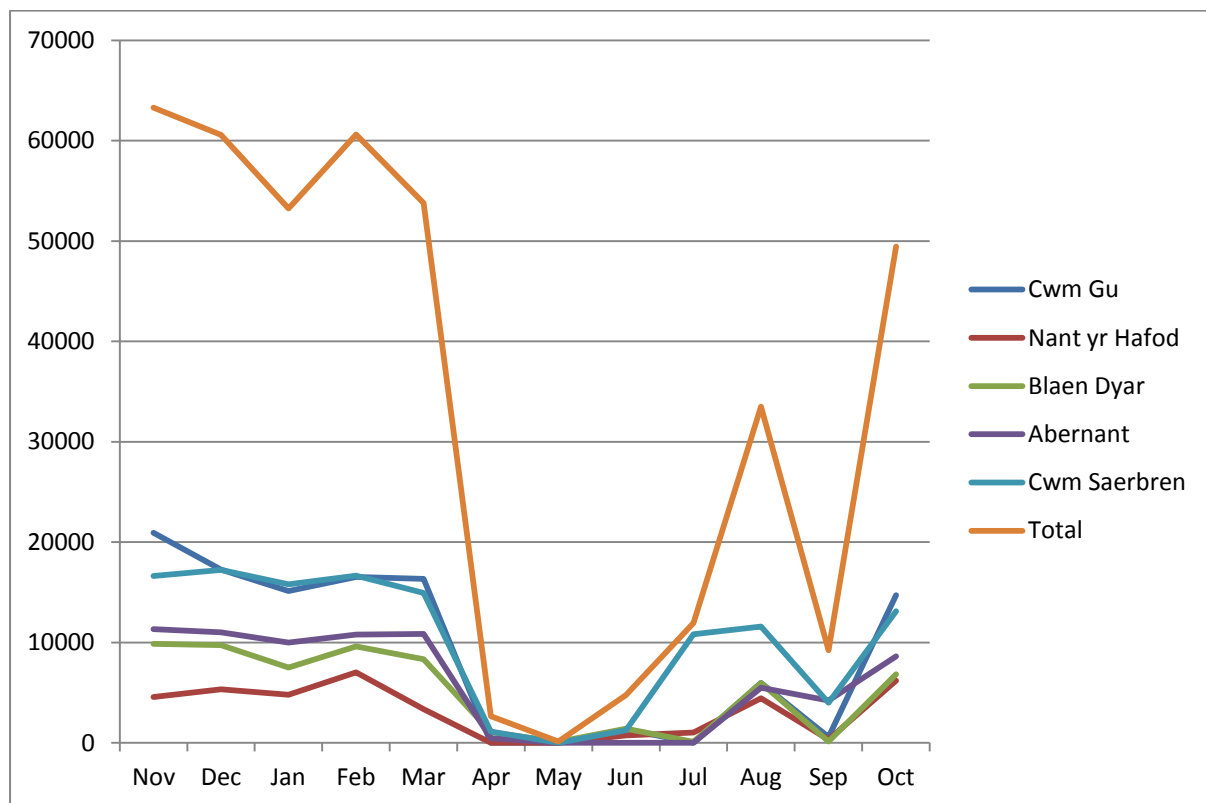
<http://www.llangattockgreenvalleys.org/>

ENERGY GENERATION PROJECTS

By Steve Sharp

Hydro schemes update

Local rainfall in October and November was only slightly down on the same months last year, when we had record high rainfall during the final quarter, so our hydro schemes have been generating lots of electricity. As this is our final newsletter of the year, I've produced the graph below to show the electricity generated by our five hydro schemes during the last 12 months.



Monthly generation (kWhs) from November 2019 to October 2020

We had a series of power cuts at the Cwm Gu scheme in October, which the local DNO Western Power put down to branches or trees falling on or blowing against the power lines in the area. Fortunately we have a video camera set up in the turbine house there so we were able to attend site shortly afterwards and restart the scheme.

In the last newsletter, I mentioned that a hole had opened up before the intake weir at the Cwm Gu scheme. Our maintenance contractor dug out a lot of the mud and soil before the intake and reinforced the area, so we're hopeful this will prevent the problem from reoccurring.

On behalf of the directors and advisors of LGV MH2, I'd like to thank our Members for their continued support and our volunteers for all their efforts over the past year. Whatever you're able to do over the Christmas period, I hope you have a relaxing and enjoyable time and let's hope that the New Year brings us some cheer.



SINCE THE SUMMER!

By Jackie Charlton

I could talk about the affects of COVID on our activities this year but lets move away from that right now.



Since returning to volunteering in August we have been really busy trying to keep up with our wood and charcoal orders. The charcoal burner on loan to us from Sirhowy Woodland Group has been fantastic and we are about to consider purchasing our own next year. We have depleted our wood stocks completely now and looking for more wood in the new year.

We need to increase our volunteer pool too so over the last couple of months we have asked a local photographer to pull together a short video which LCW can use to encourage more volunteers to join us. This will help to keep the charity sustainable and bring in new ideas.

Next on our busy agenda is to make the site much safer and easier to access as we do suffer considerable difficulties in the winter months, getting wood deliveries off the site across our small meadow. Funding is available for us to fit French drains, which will remove the surface water by installing trenches that are backfilled with gravel, at our gate entrances. No more getting stuck in the mud for LCW!

The autumn great tree plant was postponed as we were again under lock down when that was planned but the spring will do. There are 400 little whips waiting in their tree nursery ready to be planted.

LCW has also had some great news about managing an iconic woodland in Crickhowell. The Woodland Trust has invited us to manage the Bluebell Wood by coppicing hazel and removing trees that have been felled by contractors. Llangattock Green Valleys has also asked us to manage a very small woodland which they are considering purchasing right now. This is a very special woodland too, small but beautiful. One of the hydro turbines is sited in this woodland.

2021 is looking very exciting for Llangattock Community Woodlands!





BOB'S BEE NOTES - Summary of 2020

This year we have all experienced turmoil in our lives and seen others suffering illness and distress. For those of us that have largely escaped the trauma of Covid we are told we can only try to keep as safe as possible by self-isolation and hygienic behaviour.

As we were looking after our bees (and they are a form of livestock), we were allowed to go about normal inspections that are necessary to check for disease and possible swarming activity, both of which can happen from time to time.



Unfortunately, there were a series of events weather-wise in late spring and earlier in the summer that meant most colonies were stressed into a situation where the swarming instinct kicked in. I was away from home during that time so missed all the "fun", but found the results of the previous activity when I eventually did my colony inspections once I was back home in Llangattock.

Two of my large colonies had swarmed themselves out of existence, leaving lots of stores behind, and a third had only a laying worker and a small number of worker bees, along with again, lots of stores. The laying worker is a worker bee (an unfertilized female) that starts laying eggs when the Queen's pheromones are not present; as she cannot mate, all of her eggs are unfertilised, so only produce small drones (males).

The summer months were bad news for the bees as it was either too hot and dry for nectar to secrete or too wet and cool for the bees to get out of the hives to collect stores. The result was smaller colonies going into autumn with next to no stores to see the bees through the winter months. I have seen several colonies this autumn that will struggle to get through to late spring and possibly die out as a result of starvation or cold because the colony is too small to be viable.



On the other hand, a few colonies did produce a surplus of honey but I think they are the exceptions this year. Every year is different. Llangattock Community Woodland bees did quite well although we had to combine two hives to make one. This means there are more bees in the remaining hive to help keep each other warm, giving them a better chance of surviving the winter months. It also means they have more stores too and we are keeping a watchful eye on how much of the fondant they eat to help them through.

There is always next year.
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. 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 for a membership form.



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. You can meet our Board of Directors [here](#).

We'd also like to get a few more volunteers involved in monitoring the hydro 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@llangatockgreenvalleys.org.

