



Annual Report 2013/14



torrshydro
NEW MILLS

Introduction

Welcome to the Torrs Hydro Annual Report for the year to 30th September 2014.

This year we have made progress with the plant, received many more visitors, and put the enterprise on a more sustainable footing.

The directors are grateful as ever for the ongoing commitment, dedication and determination of all our volunteers in keeping Archie turning.

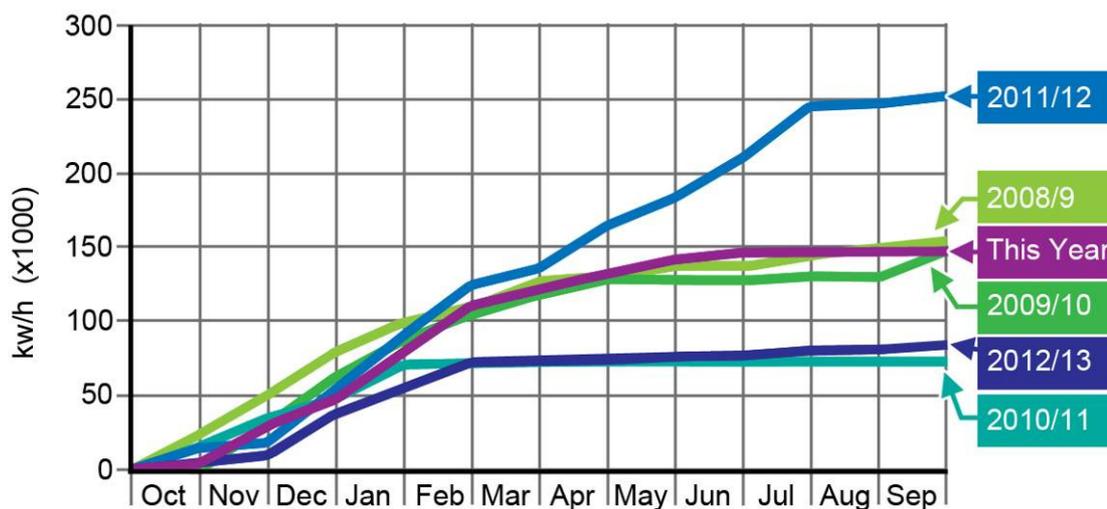
Power Generation

This year's power generation was pleasingly average, with a total of 147,244 kWh.

Three months made it into Archie's Top Twenty: January (#3, with 35,137 kWh), February (#8, with 29,252 kWh) and November 2013 (#14, with 25,378 kWh).

The graph below of cumulative generation totals for our 6 years of operation indicates our 3 average years (including 2013-14), two poor (due once to low rainfall and once to flood damage) and one stellar year when it only stopped raining for the Olympics.

Cumulative power generation



Financial Summary

This year's power generation has been very close to our average and it is therefore very pleasing to be reporting a profit of £5,411 following the £8,321 loss reported for 12/13. Two factors have contributed to this. Firstly, since January 2014 we have been paid a higher rate by the Co-operative group for the electricity we generate and supply to their store. Secondly, we received a lump sum from the Environment Agency to cover the cleaning of the Fish Pass.

Our income from power generation is made up of fees from sale of electricity to the Coop (to power their local food store) and a 'top-up' paid to 'green' energy generators funded through the sale of Renewable Obligation Certificates.

The latter's price varies slightly but is usually just over 4p/kWh, and is unlikely to change.

The price for electricity sold to the Coop was fixed for the first 5 years. That agreement came to an end in January 2013, and we then reverted to the formula agreed in 2008 where the rate we received was tied to the energy wholesale price. As this had hardly changed in the intervening 5 years we were due to receive a massive 0.1% rise to 5.8p/kWh. (The considerable increase seen in the *retail* price of electricity is due to factors other than its *wholesale* price). Director Sean Whewell discussed this with the Co-op, and was able to persuade them to award a substantial increase to 9.5p/kWh.

This has substantially improved our bottom line as well as Torrs Hydro's overall viability.

After lengthy negotiations with the Environment Agency, Torrs Hydro directors have also signed an agreement to take over the maintenance of the fish pass until 2033 in return for a one-off payment to compensate us for the effort involved in keeping it clear of debris and running smoothly. The agreement runs until 2033 and the income will be apportioned over that time.

The financial headline figures are that income was £23,500 (compared to £12,640 in 2012/13) and expenditure has remained consistent at £12,518 (£13,765 in 2012/13).



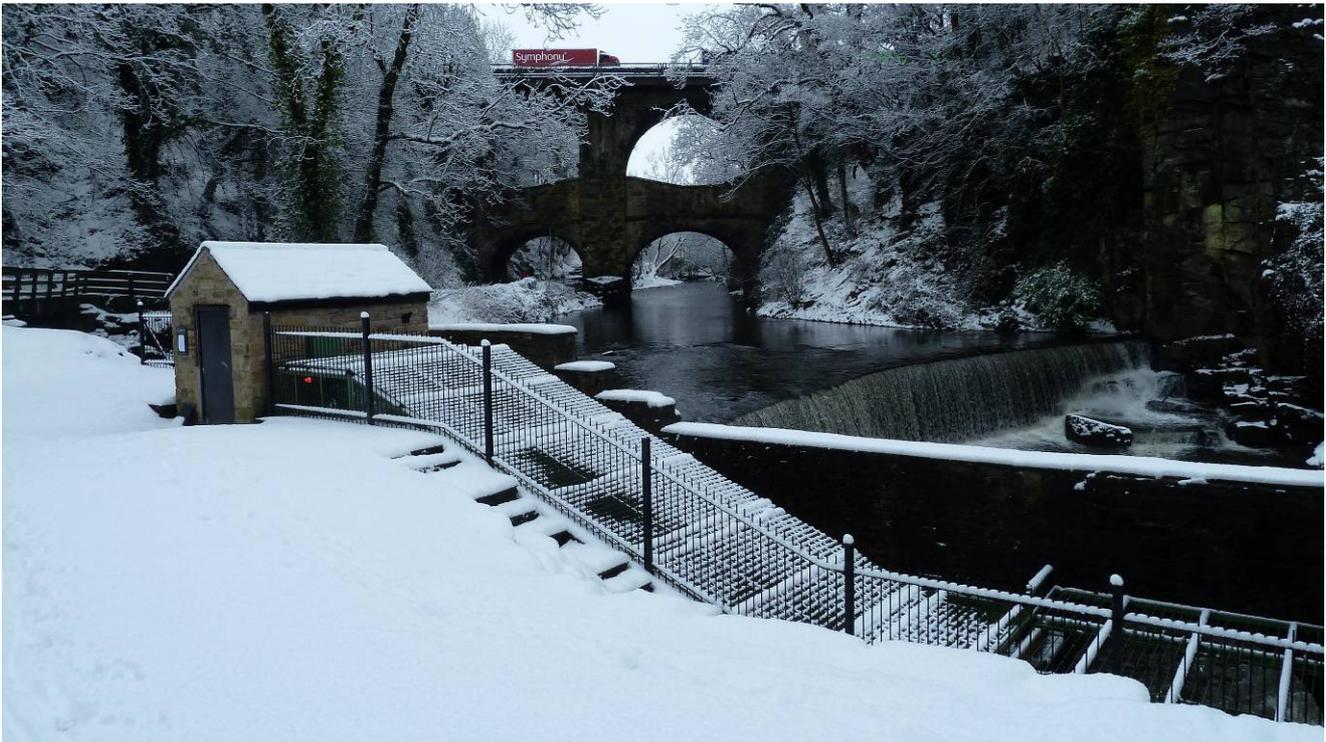
Share Issue

The initial response to the new share issue approved at last year's AGM was disappointing, with only 7 applications for new/additional shares received, for a total of 3,750 shares. At the end of the financial year, Torrs Hydro had a total of 129,701 shares owned by just over 230 primary shareholders.

Community Fund

Due to the poor generating total last year, it was not possible to top up the Torrs Hydro Community Fund so we were forced to ration our payouts accordingly. As a result, only two of the applications for funding made this year were successful, with £100 each going to Visit New Mills and the New Mills One World Festival.

Torrs Hydro Plant Operations report 2013/14



As ever, the plant would not continue running without the daily care shown by our volunteers. There were times when deposition at the inlet after heavy rainfall meant more work to move it on or through the plant but this was accomplished by volunteers in waders and with buckets without the need to hire diggers.

The most significant event happened in October 2013. A shutdown late evening on the 22nd October was due to low battery voltage in the control panel caused by a problem in the charging circuit. During the shutdown, the drive belts came off the pulleys. Down time was used to replace these and to undertake other essential maintenance. In addition the circuit board was repaired together with the precautionary replacement of the control panel batteries. The computer also required attention at this point. Several days running daylight hours only, new drive belt tension checked and all was back to normal running condition on 4th November. There was a side benefit of not pulling in debris from the very high running river.

Despite the repairs, the computer only lasted until the end of January 2014; it's a hostile environment for a standard PC. We're now running with PC No. 4.

Ongoing improvements

The brake from Andritz has been delivered and we will work with one of their UK companies to enable installation. We also continue to look for feasible and affordable ways to clear the tailrace. Our Town Council has ruled out any change to the layout of the Torrs Riverside Park to allow easier access to Archie, so our volunteers are looking for a more creative solution. To enable easier and safer clearing of the inlet, we are slowly but surely making modifications to the fencing.

You can keep up to date with improvements as they happen through the year via our blog and members' newsletter.

Visitors, Talks & Events



Torrs Hydro has continued to attract a stream of visitors wanting to know more about generating hydro electricity.

We held regular open days spread throughout the year, several of which coincided with events already going on in the town such as the Torrs Hydro AGM, the One World Festival and New Mills Festival. Another formed part of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Eco-home event, a countywide green initiative offering a fortnight's programme of 'open house' events in May 2014. All dates for open days were displayed on the website and on the engine house notice board.



Other community groups wanting to set up hydro schemes have been welcomed. A potential new hydro start-up at St Neots in Cambridgeshire, visited and corresponded with us several times.

We receive repeat and one-off visits from across the education spectrum. Chinley and New Mills Primary schools regularly visit to do project work on electricity and were "keen to be green". At the other end of the educational system, University of Sheffield students visited as part of their architecture course. Their brief was to design for a sustainable project. Other students from Sheffield came on a regular basis to take flow measurements in the river. This had to be done in conjunction with us, as Archie had to be turned off in the process. Archie was also the focus for an art installation by students from New Mills secondary school. (see *left*)

A visitor from Gearshift Theatre came on his bike as part of his countrywide tour. Tim Pedmore, a storyteller was using his journey experiences in his productions. Other visitors included a party from WRAP and the Environment Agency, and Hannah Kitcher sponsored by the Power to Change Trust.

Directors have been busy spreading the word. Esther Jones was invited by Cooperative Alternatives (a Northern Ireland organisation devoted to developing successful co-operatives and community benefit societies) to talk at a workshop in Belfast promoting community shares as a means of raising capital for community led projects in December 2013, and in July 2014 Richard Body was a guest speaker at the Bakewell Green Show. A huge thank you to our secretary Jan Szechi and director Mary Cohen for keeping abreast of a busy diary of appointments!



Photographs and diagrams by John and Mary Cohen, Jan Szechi and Steve Essex

**THANKS TO ALL OUR HARD WORKING VOLUNTEERS
AND TO OUR SHAREHOLDERS
ALL OF WHOSE COMMITMENT TO TORRS HYDRO 'MAKE IT HAPPEN'**

Torrshydro New Mills Limited is a Community Benefit Society

Website; www.torrshydro.org Blog: torrs-hydro-newmills.blogspot.com

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for the Benefit of the Community)

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