

The Sheffield Solar Farm

Micro-Generation Database

August 2012, Report 15



The Solar Farm welcomes Lisa back from maternity leave

Those of you who have been with us since the early days of the Microgen Database will remember Lisa Hall. She was responsible for getting the whole thing up and running, writing the code to analyse the data and producing the original reports. Pregnant with twins, Lisa left on maternity leave just before the new website went live in October last year.

After a year of maternity leave, Lisa is now back and full of ideas for how we can develop and add value to the project.

Lisa is also managing two European projects (called Renergy and Re-Green) which aim to improve regional development policies, promote the exchange of best practice, and encourage innovative policy solutions for 'green buildings' and renewable energy solutions.

On her return, Lisa will be known by her married name of Clark.

Reporting table news

The reporting table has been made to work in Excel format this month, so you won't need to install any software. It is written for Excel 2003 and contains some complicated formulae, so if you experience compatibility issues, please email to explain. Please include the operating system you are using and the version of Excel.

It allows you to find the nearest PV systems to your own among other things.

How to use the site...

If you think any part of the site is hard to use, [email us](#) and we will include an article here.

Find out more about PV and microgeneration

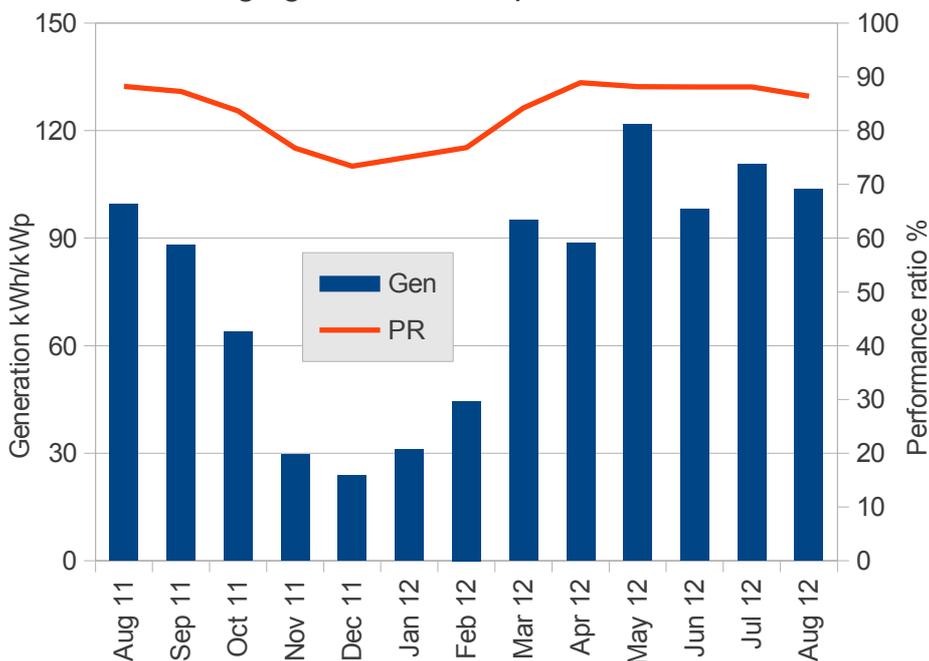
The forums section of the website provides an excellent resource for people wanting to find out about or discuss anything that is PV related.

There is another section in the forums which is dedicated to frequently asked questions. Here we try to answer questions you may have, mainly about the site, but there is also a resource section entitled "[Where can I find out more about...](#)".

This section is a collection of resources which have been suggested by our users. You can read an overview of the [potential for PV in the UK](#), find out details about [your particular PV modules](#), or about whether your PV system was installed as it [should have been](#) (for the technically minded). There is also a link to the [PVGIS](#) site, which can calculate the generation potential from your PV system.

It is intended that this resource be extended to be an information library for PV system owners, so if you have any resources which you think are missing then please mention them in the forum section or send them in directly.

Average generation and performance ratio



Generation and Performance Ratio

The report table is becoming a little unwieldy as there is now nearly eighteen hundred systems included in the report.

The large increase, up from nearly seven hundred last month, is mainly due to a commercial donor giving data for many more systems. There are over one thousand of these systems, and they are located between North Tyneside and Penzance, so quite a lot of you will have many more systems to compare against in your vicinity.

The addition of these systems has seen the generation per month rise slightly, and it has smoothed the performance ratio line a little.

Featured Installation(s)

You may think of e.on as being one of the big six energy companies, but they have also been out installing solar PV systems. They have a micro-generation division which has installed PV systems on over three and a half thousand houses around the UK. These installations are part of e.on's drive to provide renewable energy for social housing.

They have worked in conjunction with councils and social housing providers to use people's roofs for solar generation. e.on rent the roofs from the landlords and give the householder the generated electricity, while keeping the feed in tariff.

The Microgen Database has been working with e.on to provide performance data for their PV installations. This will assist e.on in assessing performance issues such as failure of systems.

So far we have included around twenty of their systems in the database, while we get up to speed with handling the data, but soon the full complement will be added, boosting the numbers in the database significantly. Many of the systems are around North Tyneside, Stoke-on-Trent, Nottingham and Exeter, so if you live in one of these areas you may find that soon you've got a lot of other systems to compare yours with.

Some of the systems have been installed with pyranometers alongside. A pyranometer monitors light levels, so these are invaluable as they allow us to test the accuracy of our calculated results for solar radiation for those locations against real data.

You can read more on e.on's Microgeneration for social housing [here](#).



Image of some of the roofs included in the e.on social housing PV project.

What's Happening on the Forum?

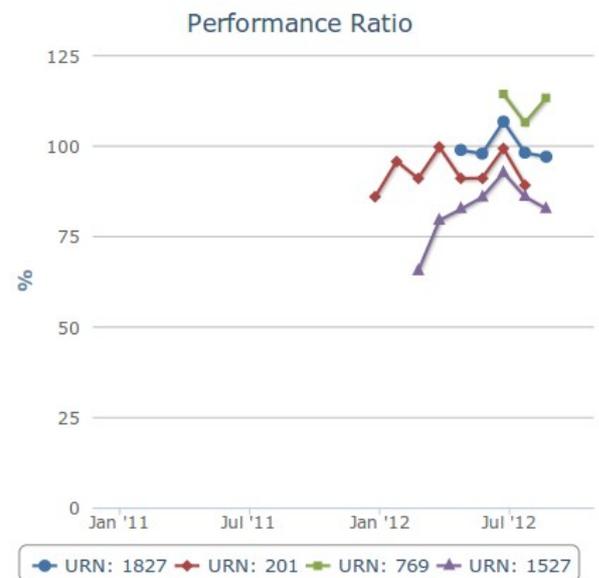
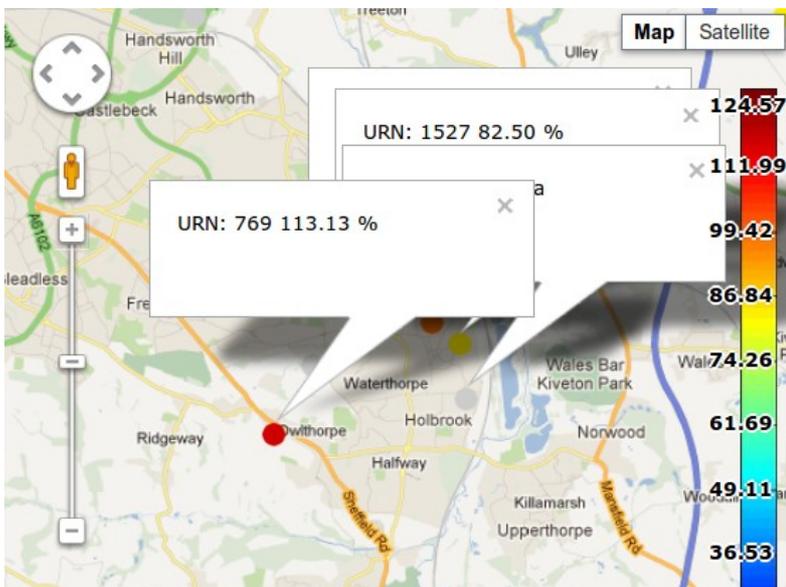
There has been an informative discussion started by [Hampshirelad](#) about the requirements for servicing your PV system and its correct installation. With the scramble to get systems installed, especially towards the end of last year, it is possible that systems have not been installed correctly, or that incorrect components have been used.

[Eastydude](#) wondered if his installation is under-performing through the latter part of summer, but it looks as if it could just be the British weather. The image below shows the performance of their system (URN 769) against some of their neighbours.

[Yotty](#) has been looking into what happens when you move house or die. Offgem provided the answer.

Partial shading reared its head again with [Bluepollly](#) being surprised at the impact it can have.

And September generation was discussed. Some donors were surprised that after some bad weather they still generated more than PVGIS suggests.



Visit our micro-generation website at: www.microgen-database.org.uk
and our testing operations site at: www.sheffieldsolarfarm.group.shef.ac.uk