



Biomass Heating
Case Study

Log Boiler
Ballykilcavan House, County Laois



Key Facts HDG-R Log boiler heating system for large country house

Previous Heating Natural Gas - still used in conjunction with Log Boiler

Year 2013 **Fuel cost / source:** Own timber from storm felled trees



*Comfortable
heating. With wood!*

Background

David Walsh-Kemmis is the 13th generation of his family to live in and run the Ballykilcavan house and farm. Looking towards the future viability of the business, David has launched a range of craft beers and a brewery and visitor centre is in development in the farmyard next to the house. Although primarily a tillage farm, there is mixed forestry with sufficient hardwood to provide timber for the HDG R log boiler. Storm felled trees are logged and stored. Depending on the type of timber, it is typically allowed to stand for 1 to 2 years to dry out. Occasionally this is topped up with thinnings from 20 year forestry.

“I grew up without much heating and didn’t think much of it but my time in Scotland and Dublin turned me soft and I really felt the cold when I returned to Ballykilcavan fulltime. When we were expecting our first baby I looked into the options and decided to install a log boiler to help heat the house. That was 2013: Glas Energy commissioned it the week our son came home from hospital – perfect timing.”

David Walsh-Kemmis

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The boiler house rests against an outside wall of the main house. It is accessed down a narrow laneway and a loader brings a tonne of timber at a time to a standing point outside the door. The log boiler sits alongside a buffer or accumulator tank which stores the heat ready for distribution when needed. To keep up with heat demand in the colder months the boiler is lit every morning, requiring David to load logs into the chamber and then top it up every 3 to 4 hours. He acknowledges that a woodchip boiler with an automatic feed system would be less of a tie but given the cost differential, the gas boiler as back-up and the ready source of logs, he is happy with his decision.



David stands at the doorway to the outside shed that is home to the HDG-R Log Boiler and 2000L accumulator tank.

For more on Ballykilcavan Brewery follow them on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Ballykilcavan/>

David finds it difficult to quantify the opportunity cost of not having timber to sell but reminds himself that heating the house solely with gas was prohibitively expensive and not particularly effective. The gas boiler remains in use but in a limited capacity.

David carries out most of the general cleaning and maintenance himself, saying “ I can clean it out but about once a year it starts to smoke a bit and I know it’s time to call Glas Energy.”

And would he recommend Glas Energy to other potential customers? Absolutely!