

Problems with solar PV

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Problems with solar PV are few and far between but I've had a few issues recently. The first is an ongoing problem with grey squirrels nesting under one module on the main roof. Obviously there is an issue with them chewing through the wiring. I have seen them have an experimental try at the DC cables on the newer system (see below). I drove them out but recently they show signs of coming back. This is despite the water that must pour under the module when it rains. The second of my problems with solar PV has been potentially more serious although relatively easy to solve. Last Tuesday when it snowed I realised one of the inverters (4 x 250W, 2 per inverter) was not working. I found two cables had parted at a connector. I taped over them with frog tape in the meanwhile getting a shock from the panel side (despite the snow on the module). Eventually I discovered the remains of the old connector which had melted. What to do? Was it something I could repair myself. The second question was had the arcing from any potential short damaged the modules on that inverter or the inverter itself? On the first point there was no working at height, its on a shed that is just above head height. It would involve working from my neighbours shed roof but she was fine about that. With cuts to the feed in tariff many of the installers/dealers have closed including the company that installed the system (apparently). There is a company that sells systems and system components that I know about that has been around for many years. I rang them and ordered the connectors. In the meanwhile I covered the module concerned to stop any output and reduce the chances of arcing. When the connectors arrived they were difficult to fit. No instructions came with them nor could I find any on the net. I covered the two modules up and had a go but could not get the connectors together. After several phonecalls to the supplier (who were very helpful) and looking a video on youtube I went back after dark and had more success. Would everything work OK. The next morning revealed yes it would. This is a minor issue and was easy to solve since I had easy access. This problem on the old system on the main roof would need professional help and hence the need to keep the squirrels at bay (with chickenwire). The reasons for the arcing? Probably the connector had not been installed properly 6 years ago (the supplier of the connectors thought). Its amazing what you can get away with though with no damage to the rest of the system. A last thought. If this had happened in the loft though we would have had a fire. Neil

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