

# How we started our seed library



by

**LAMPETER SEED LIBRARY  
BANC HADAU LLAMBED**

# **Banc Hadau Llambod / Lampeter Seed Library**

Based in Lampeter, West Wales, UK.

## **Our Aims**

- Enhance food security.
- Encourage growing Local Provenance varieties.
- Increase Resilience.
- Increase awareness of what grows well in our area's growing conditions.
- To include all edibles that grow well here.
- Encourage local food growing.
- Encourage seed saving.
- Encourage a local gift economy.
- Build community trust and cohesion around growing and food.

## **How it works.**

The seed library runs like a book library. People join, borrow seeds, grow them, eat the veg and save seeds to bring back to the library. In this way the library grows and is replenished.

The Library opens twice a month at Lampeter People's Market, where we have a free stall as a community service. Other site ideas could be a café, someone's house, an actual book library, a gardening club or online and all done via post etc.

The library was launched in November 2017, it now has

over 180 members (March 2020). We advertise in a free to use local newsletter, for which we regularly write articles that highlight the importance of seed saving.

We've tended to keep things simple, so no website, only an email, which is our main way of communicating with members.

To help us start 12 people went on a training day with Sue Stickland, author of "Back Garden Seed Saving", who is based 60 miles from us. She was very supportive and gave us some seeds to get us going as well as lots of knowledge. We use her book as our key reference for any queries we may get from members. We have also invited her back to run our main seed saving workshop each year although now feel confident enough to do this ourselves.

## **Workshops**

A fundamental aim of the library is to educate, which is why we arrange workshops on aspects of seed saving.

After our own initial training, (September 2017) we ran two local workshops on easy to save seeds, like tomatoes, peas, beans and chillies.

In year 2 we hosted a workshop run by Sue Stickland on seed saving.

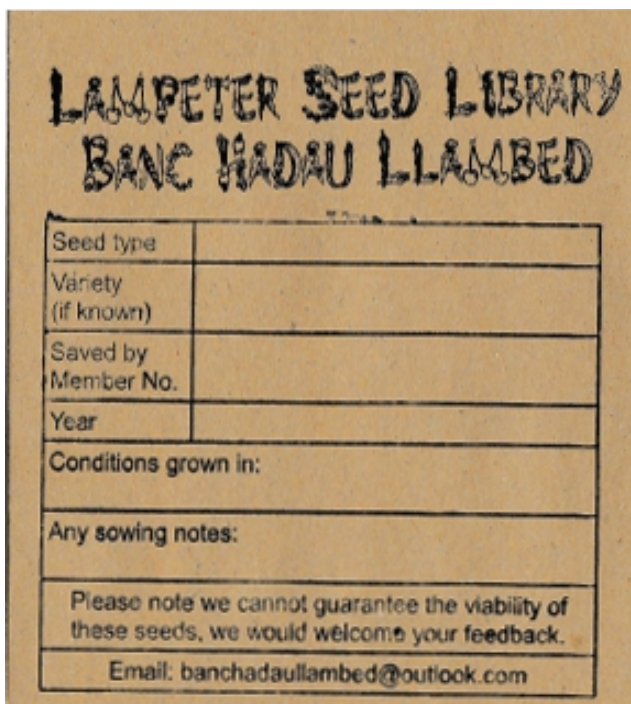
In year 3 we held workshops on *plant adaptation, looking at genetics* and *simple methods of plant isolation*, both run by

library members. Also *Seed saving, selection and roguing* – run by Sue Stickland

In year 4 we are planning our annual seed saving workshop in Sept in autumn. Some bigger plans for next year maybe a Seed Festival, we need to see how funds go.

Workshops are free, but require a deposit to secure a place, usually £5 for members and £10 non members. The deposit is returnable on attending the workshop but most people offer it as donations. We share the donations with our host site and the library.

## Funding



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Seed type	
Variety (if known)	
Saved by Member No.	
Year	
Conditions grown in:	
Any sowing notes:	
Please note we cannot guarantee the viability of these seeds, we would welcome your feedback.	
Email: banchadaullambd@outlook.com	

We started with no funds.

Lampeter Permaculture Group gave us money to attend the initial training day, to buy 2 rubber stamps for printing the seed envelopes and our initial stock of seed envelopes. The Transition group paid for our library drawers.

Since then we have sold second-hand books on gardening, held raffles for gardening related items, sold silica gel for keeping seeds dry and “The Land Magazine”, all to raise funds. People regularly give us small monetary donations at the library.

We also partnered with our local film group to show *Seed, the untold story*, it was a free film, donations welcomed and all donations from that went to the library.

All money is spent on workshops, seed envelopes, paper and printing.

The library is all free with no membership fee as our ethos is to be totally inclusive.

### **Dedicated Seed Garden**

Besides all our members saving seeds in their gardens or farms, 2018 saw a partnership with *Denmark Farm*, a local conservation farm, where we hold our main seed saving workshop in August/September each year. In preparation for these events we planted some vegetable beds with varieties to save seeds from, thus allowing the workshops to be hands on. This partnership has continued and we have since expanded the planting areas and varieties.

### **Records**

We use a simple manual system.

The membership form holds basic contact details, home growing conditions, a record of seeds borrowed and of seeds donated.(Appendix 1) These are kept in a folder.

A spreadsheet of the seed stock list, with basic details, who donated, year, how many packs, date seeds borrowed.(Appendix 2)

Petty cash system for money is simple! - “a yoghurt pot and



a cash book”. No bank accounts. If anything needs to be paid for online, one of the members does so and reclaims the money in cash. We are conscious of data protection and ensure our records are kept private.

## **Seed storage**

We have an old wooden card index box with 4 large drawers to display the seeds in. We have now added a further 4 drawer box to

accommodate the growing seed stocks. For storage between markets, we store the seeds in air tight plastic boxes that fit inside these drawers. These boxes also have a small amount of silica gel in them to absorb any moisture. Our



atmosphere can be quite variable so this helps keep the seeds dry. Seeds can be displayed in any type of box or drawer, something like shoe boxes would work, just need to be aware of keeping seeds from getting damp and not too warm.

## **Library Manning**

We have a rota for manning the library between volunteers (10, I think at last count, so commitment is once every couple of months). It is open for 3 hours on a Saturday, twice a month at our local People's Market. Two people man the library together, it just spreads the load and it is more social.

## **Growing Challenges**

We are currently undertaking a Welsh Tea Growing Challenge. The library bought tea seeds and offered some free to anyone who signed up to the challenge. Members are encouraged to share information on growing conditions and germination dates etc. If we are successful we may be able to start to take cuttings of germinated plants and share these too.

Currently we are looking to help bulk up small quantities of heritage grains: wheat, barley, oats etc. We are looking to extend these types of initiatives.

## **Seed Swap**

The local permaculture group has run the local seed swap annually. Last year the library offered to run it. This is where anyone can bring seeds to swap, be they for food or flowers, trees, shrubs etc. If someone wishes to take seeds but has none to bring they can offer a monetary donation instead. These donations, less expenses, go towards the seed library funds.

## **Partnerships**

We have forged good relationships with a local conservation farm and who now host our seed garden.

We are members of GM Freeze and support their objections to outside field trials due to their threats to the purity of open pollinated seeds; like the genie in the bottle, once unleashed you can never put it back.

We are working with Gaia Foundation on their Seed Sovereignty programme, UK & Ireland, a 3 year project (now into year 3, hopefully to be extended) to encourage more local and organic seed production and widening the types of seeds available to small scale farmers and smallholders wanting to grow organic seed. This year we are looking to help bulk up the initial range of oat and barley seeds, which due to the small amount of initial stock works well with the variety of growers in our membership.

### **New libraries**

We are now regularly asked to do talks to tell others how we started and hopefully seeding new libraries; the first of which is in opening in Llandrindod Wells. The requests come from far and wide so in order to help out people living too far away to visit (and keep our carbon footprint down), we have produced a short video which is available on YouTube explaining how it all began. You can view this on <https://youtu.be/H9e429tHrJY>



## Useful Websites and Recommended Books and General Information

### Some suppliers of open pollinated seeds

Real Seed Company <https://www.realseeds.co.uk/>

Seed Cooperative <https://seedcooperative.org.uk/>

Gaia Foundation Seed Sovereignty Program

<https://www.gaiafoundation.org/what-we-do/food-seed-and-climate-change-resilience/seed-sovereignty-uk-ireland-programme/>

### Useful Books

The Seed Garden: The Art and Practice of Seed Saving by Lee Buttala <https://www.seedsavers.org/mission>

Back Garden Seed Saving by Sue Stickland. Published By Eco Logic Books

### Other Suppliers

The rubber stamps came from:

<https://www.bespokelaseruk.co.uk/portfolio/products-stamps/>

We liked their products, made from Welsh beech and rubber.

The seed info stamp is 92x70 mm and cost £28

The library name header stamp is 92x23 mm and cost £25 plus p&p at 2017 prices

We are happy to provide the template for the seed info as you are welcome to use that rather than “reinvent the wheel”.

Seed envelopes are windowless manilla wage envelope available from most stationers (108x102mm)

# Appendix 1 Membership Form

**LAMPETER SEED LIBRARY**  
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Cefynw/ Surname:.....

## Ffurflen Aelodaeth/ *Membership Form*

Cedwir gwybodaeth ar y ffurflen hon yn ddiogel a chaiff ei ddefnyddio yn unig at ddibenion Banc Hadau Llambled. Pan yddych chi'n rhoi eich cyfeiriad e-bost inni, rydych chi'n cydsynio i'n cysylltu â chi drwy'r e-bost. / *Information on this form will be kept securely and be used only for the purposes of the Lampeter Seed Library. By giving us your email details, you are consenting to our contacting you by email.*

Rhif a dyddiad aelodaeth/ *Membership no + date:*

Enw llawn/ *Full name:*

Cyfeiriad/ *Address:*

Amodau tyfu/ *Home growing conditions:* e.e. uchder, math o bridd, cysgodol neu heulog, gwyntog/ *eg altitude, type of soil, shady or sunny, windy*

Rhif ffôn neu ebost/ *phone no or email:*

### DIWEDDARIADAU/ *UPDATES*

Dyddiad / <i>Date</i>	Hadau mewn / <i>Seeds donated</i>	Hadau allan/seeds <i>withdrawn</i>	Adnewyddu aelodaeth;/ <i>membership renewal</i>	Manylion (math o hadau, adborth) / <i>Details (seed type, feedback)</i>



**Grŵp Paramaethu Llambled**  
**Lampeter Permaculture Group**



## Appendix 2 Spreadsheet stock list

Seed type	Variety	Donated by	Saved date	24/11/18														
				Stock check	8/12	12/01	26/01	9/02	23/02	9/03	23/03	13/04	27/04	11/05	25/05	8/06		
Achocha	Fat Baby	34	2017/8	11						1	1							
Amaranth, Grain		34	2018	4														
Amaranth, Leaf	Red Hopi	14	2018	3														
Artichoke, Globe		11	2018	4														
Bean	Lilians Guatamalan	11	2018	11														
Bean, borlotti	Birds Egg	31	2018	9														
Bean, borlotti	district nurse	Newtown		37						4								
Bean, Borlotti	Birds Egg	31	2018	10														
Bean, Borlotti	district nurse	Cellan	2017	0														
Bean, Broad	Aquadulce	15	2018	4														
Bean, Broad	Aquadulce	15	2018	1														
Bean, Broad	Crimson Flower	Newtown/36	2017/18	2							2							

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