



The Sparrows' Nest

Acceptance policy for new materials/collections

Established in 2008 and based in a house in St. Ann's, Nottingham, "The Sparrows' Nest – Library and Archive for Anarchist and Radical History" works to preserve and curate extensive collections of historic documents and specialist literature, telling stories of individuals and groups who engaged in social movements and protests.

Holding thousands of books, journals, pamphlets, zines, leaflets, posters and other archival materials, we focus on the history of anarchist groups in the UK and beyond and individuals as well as the history of other social movements, protests and dissent in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Like every other library and archive, the Sparrows' Nest has only limited resources and finite physical space to store materials and make them available to researchers.

The following guidelines aim to clarify what kind of documents and other archival materials we can accept and to provide some information what happens when someone offers us a collection of materials. However, most of these guidelines are flexible,* therefore:

If you have any documents and/or other archival materials, please don't bin them, but get in touch with us!

What we accept ...

We **specialise in collecting and preserving documents** (books, pamphlets, papers, leaflets, posters, etc.) but we also hold other items such as badges and banners.

We hold an ever growing collection of **books** and are always happy to accept more. Our main sections are:

- Non-fiction by/about/influenced by and influencing Anarchists and Anarchism;
- Anarchist art, fiction, poetry, music etc;
- Local studies;
- History and Economics (including non-anarchist works of philosophy and/or socioeconomic theory).

We hold a vast amount of **pamphlets and papers, zines, journals, etc.** (this includes regular and one-off publications). As outlined above, we accept anarchist materials originating in the UK and beyond, as well as non-anarchist materials relating to local struggles.

We accept **other documents** which fall into similar categories. That includes not only materials which were intended for publication (e.g. posters and leaflets), but also internal materials such as correspondence by persons and organisations, conference documents, minutes, financial records etc.

In practice we will always decide on a case by case basis whether or not we are the best place to preserve and curate a collection of materials, so please **contact us** if you have any materials you think may be relevant.

* With the exception of the privacy-related guidelines in the '... and what we do with it section'.



... and what we will (not) do with it

When [contacting us](#) about a possible donation, **please give us a rough idea what materials you are offering** (books, pamphlets, random bits of paper, etc.), their general condition (were they e.g. stored in a pigeon poo infested attic?), who published them for what purpose (e.g. whether it is a collection of leaflets from a specific group) and whether they were created in relation to specific issues/struggles.*

Before offering a collection please make sure that everyone concerned is OK with that (e.g. discuss within your group whether everyone agrees that internal materials are given to us). Please confirm with us that you have done so. In most cases we will be unable to check ourselves, and would like to avoid receiving a grumpy off email demanding stuff back after we processed it.

We sometimes accept materials on the basis of a long term loan and process them accordingly. Although most new materials are integrated in the existing collections, we understand that some people would like it if **their collection is kept together**. In principle this is possible.

We will examine and sort a collection that we have accepted and process it **as soon as we can** (due to our workload this may take a while!). By processing we mean the following:

- Books or pamphlets will be:
 - checked for damp, mould and/or other icky stuff;
 - checked for loose or missing pages;
 - catalogued;
 - and put with their new friends in the appropriate place (shelf, archival box, etc.).
- A bag/box/folder of assorted papers (say a collection of pamphlets, zines and leaflets) will be:
 - checked for damp, mould and/or other icky stuff;
 - if necessary dried, smoothed and bits of metal (pins, paper clips, etc.) will be removed;
 - sorted, catalogued and (if possible/deemed necessary) digitised;
 - put in a safe enclosure (usually an archival – i.e. acid free – box) and stored in the appropriate place.

Regarding the digitisation of materials, please note that **we will never put a document online that was created within the last 40 years, unless it was originally intended for publication**, and even then we will decide on a case by case basis whether or not to do so.

We know how precious the materials are we are entrusted with and we take this responsibility very seriously indeed. Everyone involved with the Sparrows' Nest is dedicated to this project and are very much aware of its importance.

We will do **everything we can to preserve accepted materials and make them accessible to users**. We will **do our utmost to protect this project and keep it going indefinitely**.

Should this project fail for whatever reason we would do whatever we could to make sure the materials are not lost to future generations. Any loaned collections would be given back to their owners whilst we would endeavour find a suitable home for the other materials. **We can guarantee you that we would never dump or sell any rare or even unique materials**.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

* Sorry that this sounds overly complicated, in practise something very simple would be very helpful, for instance something like this: "one folder with antifascist leaflets from the early 1990s".