



What we got up to in our 15th Year

It has been another busy year at the Nest!

Loads of materials were processed, the [Digital Library](#) expanded by hundreds of new titles, the physical collections and the layout of the Nest extensively reorganised, an exhibition put on, the [Refugee Forum](#) assisted in [setting up their archive](#), guided walks undertaken, stalls run, oral history interviews recorded, undergrads entertained and two (!) Jars of Evil filled with rusted staples and other corrosive nasties that were removed from precious documents.



We will take a bit of time to rest our weary feathers, but want to end the year with a quick roundup and many sincere thanks for all of your support over the last decade and a half.

Without all the generous donations of your amazing materials, your time and of course your hard cash, there would be no Sparrows' Nest.

And it is your continued interest in our work, your physical and digital visits, you turning up at events, your research enquiries, plugging us in your networks, and not least your kind words of encouragement that keep us motivated.

It is a great honour, an immense privilege and of course excellent fun to be able to continue our work. We greatly enjoy looking after incredible resources and providing interested audiences with opportunities to learn from struggles past, not only to better understand the world we live in, but to better fight today's struggles.

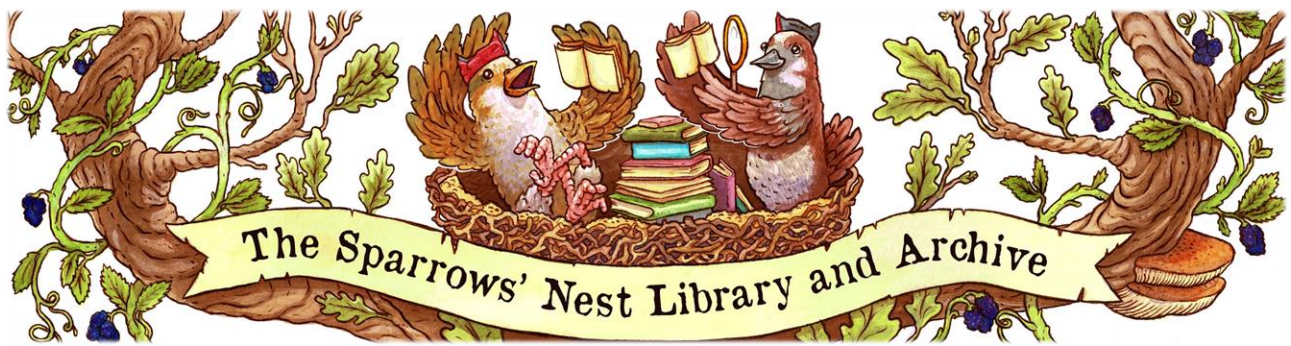


As always, we were much delighted by all the smaller collections (a box of pamphlets, leaflets and magazines here, an envelope of photographs there) that were kindly donated throughout the year. All of those contained amazing materials and were much appreciated.

We also took in two huge new collections, each filling a van to the brim and requiring many, many hours of graft to process, transforming thousands of items arriving in bulging veg and bread crates into neat document bundles cosily snuggled into acid free archival boxes.

One of these bulk collections contained documents previously held at the Rainbow Centre (and later the [Sumac Centre](#)), mostly relating to key environmental and animal rights struggles, but also including many crucial local records.

The second large collection contained box after box of amazing materials regarding LGBTQ+ liberation, as well as many personal items from two local pioneers of the movement. There are a number of unique artefacts and unusual ephemera, including flags and costumes.



That came with some new conservation challenges, but we cannot wait to scare new generations with [Chris Richardson's gloriously terrifying papier-mâché Thatcher mask](#).

With our friends from [People's Histreh](#) (no typo), we held [an exhibition regarding local resistance to the 2003 invasion of Iraq](#), displaying images by [photo journalist Alan Lodge](#), contextualised with assorted materials from our collections. The event was very successful, exceeding our expectations for visitor numbers and levels of engagement. Once more many thanks to all the wonderful workers at [Broadway Cinema](#) for their ongoing support.

Again collaborating with People's Histreh, we also put together and repeatedly ran a [new guided history walk around the City Centre](#), focussing on and extensively drawing from local radical leaflets and periodicals, exploring their role in fighting social struggles and discussing how they were disseminated in the days before the internet.



Throughout the year we continued our digitisation efforts, primarily focussing on anarchist newspaper [Freedom](#). We now finished processing our current collections of [Freedom](#), [digitising a total of 2,070 issues from 11 decades, comprising some 16,300 pages](#). We hope to return to this in the near future as we aim to further complete our collections (please [contact us](#) if you might be able to [fill in any gaps](#)).

To mitigate escalating issues regarding our limited storage capacity, and to improve the accessibility of the archival materials, we had to significantly reduce our collections of soft and hardcover books this year.

We deaccessioned several hundred volumes (mostly duplicates), and were very grateful that we managed to sell several meters worth of books at the London Anarchist Bookfair, finding new homes for many brilliant titles, raising funds and clearing some much needed shelf space.

Thus we could see the year out by replacing some of the trusty old bookshelves that have been with us since the very beginning. Our new heavy duty shelves allow us to store the many boxes of published and unpublished archival materials much better and more conveniently.



Next year is looking to be busy and exciting. The next exhibition (focussing on local LGBTQ+ liberation) is already in the works for Pride 2024. We have also lined up a cross country field trip to pick up yet another huge and exciting collection. And although much progress has been made, there still remains a backlog of materials in need of attention, not to speak of the many processed items that yet await digitisation.

Once more many thanks to everyone for everything you have done for us this and every year since we first opened back in December 2008.

We will see you in 2024. Look after yourselves and each other. And all of you busily creating new materials over the holidays, please remember to make life easy for anarcho-archivists in 30 years' time by dating your stuff!

With all our very best wishes and solidarity,
The Sparrows' Nest, Nottingham, Dec 2023.

info@thesparrowsnest.org.uk
<https://thesparrowsnest.org.uk>