



THE SPARROWS' NEST LIBRARY AND ARCHIVE  
Not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee  
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## Acceptance policy for new materials/collections

The Sparrows' Nest Library and Archive has been going since 2008. Based in a house in Nottingham, we hold several tens of thousands of documents focussing on:

- 1) the history of anarchist groups and individuals in the UK and beyond and
- 2) the history of other social movements, protests and radicalism in Nottingham and the wider area.

We work to **identify, acquire, preserve and curate** collections of relevant materials in order to **make them accessible to interested audiences free of charge**.

Like every other library and archive, the Sparrows' Nest has limited resources and finite physical space to process and store materials.

These guidelines aim to clarify what 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. In practise we always access any offer on a case to case basis.

## 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 a significant collection of **books** and are in principle 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 large collections of **pamphlets, 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.

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.

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

When **contacting us** regarding 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.

The more information you can provide us with, the better, but do not worry, brief information like: “A box of stuff from the 80s.”, or “one folder with antifascist leaflets from the early 1990s” is very helpful indeed.

**Before offering a collection please make sure that everyone concerned is OK with that** (e.g. discuss within your group whether everyone agrees that 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 grumpy emails demanding stuff back after we put in the hours to process 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**. This may be 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) digitised;
  - put in a safe enclosure (usually an archival – i.e. acid free – box) and stored in the appropriate place.

As a rule of thumb, we will not digitise unpublished documents that were created within the last 40 years.

We endeavour to hold two copies of any published materials. Additional copies that are donated to us may be gifted to other institutions and/or persons or sold for fundraising purposes.

We know how precious the materials are we are entrusted with and we take this responsibility very seriously. Everyone involved with the Sparrows' Nest is dedicated to this project and 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 can to make sure the materials are not lost to future generations and find suitable homes for them.

**If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to [get in touch](#).**