

## How to find information in the Riverstone and District Historical Society Local History Collection

There are 5 ways to find information in this collection:

- search for particular words that appear in the text by clicking the Search button
- browse documents by Title by clicking the “title” button
- browse documents by Subject by clicking the “subject” button
- browse documents by geographical area (Riverstone, Schofields etc) by clicking the “locality” button
- browse documents by Resource Type (Photographs, Riverstone Journal etc) by clicking the “resource type” button

### How to read the documents

You can tell when you have arrived at an individual book or document because its title, or an image of the front cover, appears at the top left of the page. *Click on the folders to open or close them; click on the open book at the top to close it.*

### How to search for particular words

From the search page, you can search the collection by carrying out these simple steps:

- Select the field you would like to search on (i.e. title, subject etc), the default field in “keywords”
- Select whether you want to search for all or just some of the words
- Type in the words you want to search for
- Click the *Begin Search* button

When you make a query, the titles of twenty matching documents will be shown. There is a button at the end to take you on to the next twenty documents. From there you will find buttons to take you on to the third twenty or back to the first twenty, and so on. *Click the title of any document, or the little button beside it, to view it.*

A maximum of 50 is imposed on the number of documents returned. You can change this number by clicking the *Search Preferences* button at the top of the page.

### Search terms:

Whatever you type into the query box is interpreted as a list of words or phrases called “search terms.” A term is a single word containing only letters and digits, or a phrase consisting of a sequence of words enclosed in double quotes (“...”).

Using the symbol \* at the end of a query term matches all words *starting with* that word, e.g. using **rail\*** in a search will match all words starting with **rail** (i.e. railway, railcar etc).

Using the symbol /**x** can be used to give higher weight to one or more of the query terms, eg **railway/10 station** gives “railway” 10 times more weight than “station” when ranking documents.

### Query type:

There are two different kinds of query:

*Queries for **all** of the words.* These look for documents (or chapters, or titles) that contain all the words you have specified. Documents that satisfy the query are displayed, in build order.

*Queries for **some** of the words.* Just list some terms that are likely to appear in the documents you are looking for. Documents are displayed in order of how closely they match the query (more occurrences of the word in the document).

Use as many search terms as you like--a whole sentence, or even a whole paragraph. If you specify only one term, documents will be ordered by its frequency of occurrence.

### Search fields:

The default field setting *Keywords* carries out a search on the title / subject / description / date / coverage (locality) fields.

By selecting from the drop down list, individual fields maybe searched, including: Title, subject, locality, description and date.

The least specific field that can be searched is *text*, which is a search function that will try and match the search term entered in the search field, to every word in every document within the collection. This has the advantage of being able to locate minor pieces of information within the collection's documents, which has not been catalogued at a higher level. However it is not a very specific search function and will invariably return a large amount of documents, many of which are not relevant to the search.

For example searching for "railway" and "Riverstone" in the "keywords" field will only return documents that contain significant information on the railway at Riverstone. Entering the same search in "text" will return any document that contains both the words "railway" and "Riverstone", which could for example include a document about Netball, mentioning that the; 'netball court is located near the railway line at Riverstone'. This plainly has no real relevance for the user searching for information on the railway at Riverstone.

### Scope of queries (searching multiple individual fields):

By altering the number of fields (under Query mode in "Search Preferences") allows the user to combine searches across fields. For example, one can search for "Post Office" in Title AND "Riverstone" in Locality.

The individual lines of the form are combined using AND (for an "all" search) or OR (for a "some" search). Terms inside the field are also combined the same way. In advanced mode, you can specify different combinations of AND/OR/NOT between the fields using the drop-down lists, and inside a field you can use boolean operators (AND, OR etc).

## Changing your preferences

When you click the *Search Preferences* button at the top of the page you will be able to change some features of the interface to suit your own requirements.

### Language preferences:

The collections' default language is English, but you can switch to a different language if you like.

The collection allows you to switch from the standard graphical interface format to a textual one. This is particularly useful for visually impaired users who use large screen fonts or speech synthesizers for output.

### Search preferences:

You can switch to an "advanced" query mode which allows you to combine terms using & (for "and"), | (for "or"), and ! (for "not"), using parentheses for grouping if desired. This allows you to specify more precise queries.

You can change the number of fields shown in the search form.

A pair of buttons controls whether upper and lower case must match when searching. For example, if "ignore case differences" is selected, *snail farming* will be treated the same as *Snail Farming* and *SNAIL FARMING*.

A pair of buttons controls whether to ignore word endings or not when searching. For example, if "ignore word endings" is selected, *snail farming* will be treated the same as *snails farm* and *snail farmer*. It may be more convenient and precise to use the search term truncation facility described above in "Search terms".

A pair of buttons controls whether accented and unaccented letters must match when searching. For example, if "ignore accents" is selected, *fédération* will be treated the same as *féderation* and *federation*.

You can turn on the search history feature, which shows you your last few queries. This makes it easy to repeat slightly modified versions of previous queries.

Finally, you can control the number of hits returned, and the number presented on each screenful.