Quick Guide to Ancestry

Ancestry is your gateway to genealogical and historical research, with more than 3 billion names in over 10,000 databases. Available FREE at Cairns Libraries from all public access computers.

Getting Started

Step 1: Log on to any Cairns Libraries public internet PCs.

Step 2: Click on the Ancestry icon.

Step 3: From the Ancestry Library Edition homepage you can do a Basic Search of the entire database by typing in the name of the person you are searching for and any other details that may help you identify a particular individual. This type of search may produce results that are not relevant. An Advanced Search is usually more useful or try Search by Location recommended in Step 4.

Step 4: For a targeted search click on “Search” from the top menu bar. This screen allows you to select a range of records by:

• Category i.e. “Census & Voter Lists”, “Immigration & Emigration” etc.
• Location. At the bottom of the screen select a region eg. “Australia”
• Selecting a country or a state will bring up a range of the records available.

To narrow your search by location click on “Search”

To change from Basic Search to Advanced Search (recommended) location click on “Show Advanced”

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• Type in the name of the person you are searching for and any other details that may help you identify a particular individual.

Searching Techniques

Exact matches only
The “Exact matches only” checkbox is located near the top of the search page. By checking this box, you will only receive matches that exactly match all search criteria. To get the most out of an exact only search, start with one or two broad search terms (eg. first and surname and location or a birth or death date). If you do not get relevant results broaden your search criteria (eg. only enter a name).

Using a wildcard
Wildcards are useful search tools when you are searching for names with alternative spellings, or names that may have been transcribed incorrectly.
An asterisk * represents zero or more characters.
A question mark ? represents a single character.
A wildcard can be used in the following ways:
• as the first letter, such as *son or ?atthew
• either the first or last character must be a non-wildcard character.
For example, Han* and *son are okay, but not *anso*
• names must contain at least three non-wildcard characters (letters).
For example, Ha*n is okay, but not Ha*

Using the Suggested Records feature
Once you have clicked into a record from the search results screen, you may find some Suggested Records displayed on the right side of the screen. Ancestry has suggested these might be relevant to your search.

Using the Card Catalogue
Ancestry’s card catalogue is a searchable listing of all record collections. From the search page click on “Card Catalogue” and enter keyword(s) you are seeking. For example if you enter Devon* with a wildcard asterisk, all databases for Devon and Devonshire will be displayed. There is also a browse function. If you are looking for Queensland databases for example, click on Q and then Quee.

There is also a filtering function. You can browse through the record sets using the filters in the left-hand sidebar to guide your browsing.

View an Image (See diagram page 4.)

Many results will have a picture of the original document.
Zoom in or out on the image by clicking on the ‘+’ and ‘−’.
Click on the toolbox icon to rotate, download (to save to a USB) or print.
When you click on SAVE, you will be given the option of sending the image home. Enter your email address, and Ancestry will email you details about the particular record you have found. If you do this multiple times in a session, Ancestry will send you one email with all the details included.
Search Hints and Tips

- To get the best results possible when searching for your family - these search hints will help.
- Instead of doing a general search from the Search tab, start your search at a specific collection, like the 1891 English census. You are much more likely to get relevant results.
- Tick ‘Exact’ on the information you’re sure about to narrow down the number of results that you receive.
- If you’re not finding your ancestors make sure that ‘Match all terms exactly’ is not ticked, this will give you a larger number of potential matches.
- When entering important dates, it’s best to leave a couple of years’ leeway, as information given in records is not always correct.
- If you can’t find your relatives in expected records try a different spelling.
- Variations in spelling (especially surnames) occur frequently in historical records - so if you can’t find an ancestor, just enter the first three letters of their surname, in your search, followed by an asterisk (*). Also try different spelling variations on a name.
- Finding your ancestor’s name does not guarantee that you’ve found the right ancestor. So cross-check your findings with other records. For example, if you have a birth record, you can cross-reference it with a census document.
- Keep a record of your searches, if you don’t keep track of where you’ve been you’re likely to keep searching the same records over and over again.
- Finally, if you’re really stuck with searching Ancestry, ask at the Library’s Reference Desk for help. We will do our best to help you get relevant results.
Further Information

**ProQuest Database guide: Ancestry Library Edition**
http://www.proquest.co.uk/assets/downloads/products/ale_sample_searches.pdf


**Unofficial guide to ancestry.com : how to find your family history on the #1 genealogy website** by Nancy Hendrickson.

These books can be borrowed from Cairns Libraries.

Key Collections

**Australia**
- Australian birth index, 1788-1922
- Australian convict index 1788-1868
- Australian convict transportation registers 1791-1868
- Australian death index 1787-1985
- Australian electoral rolls 1901-1954
- Australian marriage index 1788-1949
- 1828 NSW census
- NSW & Tasmania, Australian convict musters 1806-1849
- NSW assisted immigrant passenger lists, 1826-1896
- NSW unassisted immigrant passenger lists 1826-1922
- Queensland passenger lists 1848-1912
- Sands directories: Sydney & NSW 1858-1833
- Victoria assisted & unassisted passenger lists 1839-1923

**United Kingdom**
- Census for 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901
- British Army World War 1 pension records 1914-1920
- British Army World War 1 medal roll index cards 1914-1920
- London births and baptisms 1813-1906
- London deaths and burials 1813-1980
- London marriages and banns 1754-1921
- UK incoming passenger lists 1878-1960
- UK birth, marriage and death indexes 1837-2005
- Ireland Famine Relief Commission Papers, 1844-1847
- Ireland index to Griffith’s valuation 1848-1864
- Ireland tithe applotment books 1824-1837

**Other countries**
- Canada census collection
- Canada passenger lists 1865-1935
- France, Paris & vicinity marriages 1700-1907
- Italy, Siena, Tuscany civil registration records 1866-1937
- US census collection
- US passenger and immigration lists index 1500-1900s

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Contact your local Cairns Libraries branch, or Contact Us on www.cairns.qld.gov.au/library
Trace your family history using Cairns Libraries latest FREE databases.

**Findmypast**  
Access to the entire Australia & New Zealand, United Kingdom, Irish and United States Findmypast collections. Use this database from any public access PC from all Cairns Libraries.

**The British Newspaper Archive**  
Contains over 200 newspaper titles from the 18th to 20th century - with 4.7 million digitised pages, and millions more to come. Use this database from any public access PC from all Cairns Libraries.

**Archive Digital Books Australasia**  
Contains over 600 databases for Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, including police & government gazettes, directories, cyclopaedias and more! Access these databases from the CD-ROM Menu on the City Library’s “Genealogy computers”.

**Trove**  
A discovery service developed by the National Library of Australia, which gives users a single point of access to more than 45 million items, including library, archive and museum collections and Australian digitised newspapers (up until 1956) and images - www.trove.nla.gov.au. See Trove LibGuide.

**PapersPast**  
Contains more than one million pages of digitised New Zealand newspapers and periodicals 1839-1932 - http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast.

**London Digital Archive 1785-1985**  
Complete digital edition in full text of “The Times (London)”, searchable by keyword. Search this databases at home from the State Library of Queensland, signing up with your Cairns Libraries membership card. Go to www.cairnslibrary.com.au, and click on Online, then eResources.

**19th Century British Newspapers, 1800-1900**  
Full text digital newspaper collection for England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Search this database at home from the State Library of Queensland, signing up with your Cairns Libraries membership card. Go to www.cairnslibrary.com.au, and click on Online, then eResources.

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