

Searching the archive collections

To view records from the archives, contact history@rcplondon.ac.uk and let us know when you would like to visit. We are usually open for appointments from Monday-Friday, 10am-5pm.

The catalogue for the archives of the Royal College of Physicians of London is available online <http://rcp-asp.adlibhosting.com>

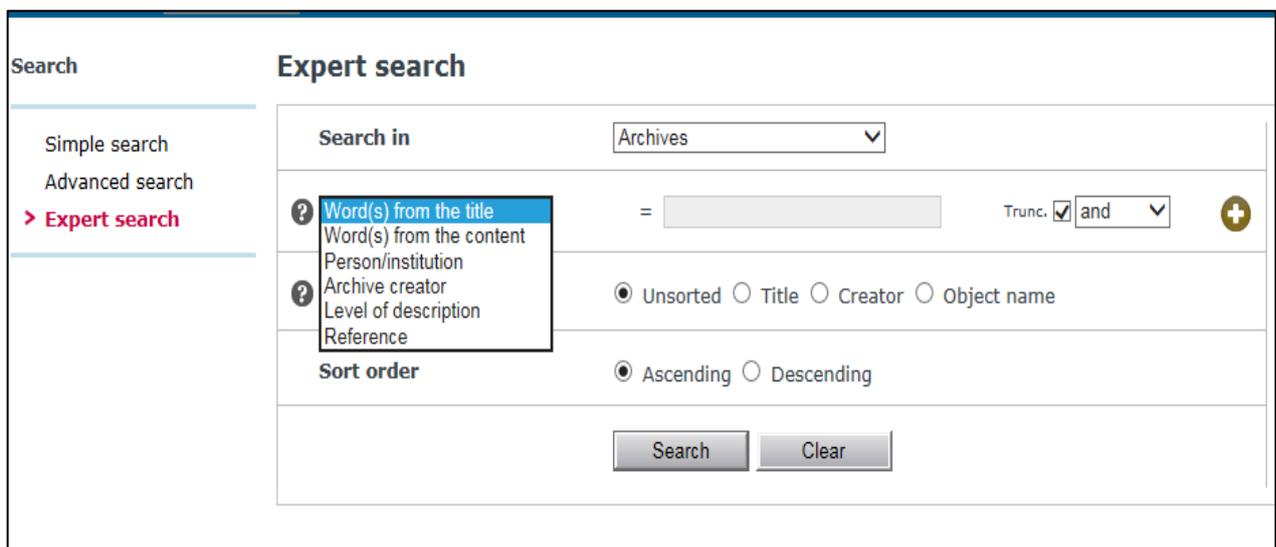
This resource also includes the catalogue for the museum collections so make sure to [Search in Archives](#).

SIMPLE SEARCH <http://rcp-asp.adlibhosting.com/search/simple>
To search only the contents of the titles of catalogue records, use the Simple search.

ADVANCED SEARCH <http://rcp-asp.adlibhosting.com/search/advanced>
To search more fully for records on a particular subject (eg. 'plague', 'apothecaries' or 'National Health Service'), search in [Words from the title/content](#).

To search for an individual or organisation (eg. 'William Harvey' or 'Drury Lane Dispensary'), search in [Words from the title/content](#) and [Archive creator](#).

EXPERT SEARCH <http://rcp-asp.adlibhosting.com/search/expert>
To make a more detailed search across the full catalogue records, use the expert search



The screenshot shows the 'Expert search' interface. On the left, there is a sidebar with three search options: 'Simple search', 'Advanced search', and 'Expert search' (which is highlighted with a red arrow). The main area is titled 'Expert search' and contains the following fields and options:

- Search in:** A dropdown menu set to 'Archives'.
- Search criteria:** A text input field followed by an equals sign, a 'Trunc.' checkbox (checked), and a dropdown menu set to 'and'. A plus sign icon is to the right.
- Search scope:** A dropdown menu with a question mark icon, currently showing 'Word(s) from the title'. Other options include 'Word(s) from the content', 'Person/institution', 'Archive creator', 'Level of description', and 'Reference'.
- Sort order:** Radio buttons for 'Unsorted', 'Title', 'Creator', and 'Object name'. Below these are radio buttons for 'Ascending' (selected) and 'Descending'.
- Buttons:** 'Search' and 'Clear' buttons at the bottom.

Combine searches from the various options to get the best results.

When you click on a search result, you will see a description of the record. If there is a + symbol below the description, you can click on this to see descriptions of related records.

CATALOGUE STRUCTURE

(cf Level of description and Reference)

Archive items are catalogued in groups, called collections. Every collection has a general catalogue record which includes a summary of all the contents. This top level record is called a fond.

There can also be two levels of catalogue which describe the relationships within each collection. These are, in order, the sub-fond and series levels.

The items themselves are catalogued at the lowest level, which is called a file.

The fond level catalogue records at the RCP have two categories of reference, with one exception*:

MS-

This category includes all the personal collections of members, important figures in the history of medicine, and collections from other organisations

RCP-

This category includes all the collections of institutional records, describing the activities of the RCP

The catalogue records at sub-fond, series and file level have four types of reference:

* ALS/ The sets of correspondence to, from and about medical personalities in the letters collection

ENV The catalogue records for legal relationships and items

MS The catalogue records for general relationships and items

MSTR The catalogue records for most non-european items

* The fond level reference for this collection is ALS-AtoZ.

A-K is catalogued and L-Z is still only partially listed.

Archive staff can search the files for L-Z items, on your behalf.

SEARCHING FOR INSTITUTIONAL RECORDS

(cf Word(s) from the title, Word(s) from the content and Archive creator)

For the records of the RCP's first official committee 'Comitia', search for file in Level of description **and** 'annals' in Word(s) from the title.

For the records of the RCP's second official committee 'Council', search for 'Council of the RCP' in Word(s) from the title **and** 'Royal College of Physicians' in Archive creator.

For papers relating to RCP architecture and buildings, search for the collection 'RCP-PREM' in Reference. Click on the + symbol in the hierarchy browser to see all the records in this collection.

For papers relating to RCP finances over the years, search for the collection 'RCP-FINAD' in Reference. Click on the + symbol in the hierarchy browser to see all the records in this collection.

For papers relating to medical education, search for the collection 'RCP-EDUCD' in Reference. Click on the + symbol in the hierarchy browser to see all the records in this collection.

For papers relating to the development of RCP membership, including licentiates, members, fellows, search for the collection 'RCP-MEMB' in Reference.

Click on the + symbol in the hierarchy browser to see all the records in this collection.

For papers relating to the regulation of clinical practice and standards by the RCP, including the formation of the National Health Service, search for the collection 'RCP-REGUC' in Reference.

Click on the + symbol in the hierarchy browser to see all the records in this collection.

For papers relating to unlicensed practice, search for 'RCP-LEGAC/UNLIC' in Reference.

Click on the + symbol in the hierarchy browser to see all the records on this topic.

For papers relating to the 1829 international public health survey, search for 'RCP-OFFIP/QUESTS' in Reference. Click on the + symbol in the hierarchy browser to see all the records on this topic.

For papers about leprosy including the 1862 survey, search for 'RCP-OFFIP/LEPROSY' in Reference.

Click on the + symbol in the hierarchy browser to see all the records on this topic.

For general papers about international public health, search for 'RCP-OFFIP/OVRS' in Reference.

Click on the + symbol in the hierarchy browser to see all the records on this topic.

For general papers on activities related to surgeons or surgery, search for 'surg' **or** 'chirurg' in Word(s) from the title **or** Word(s) from the content.

For papers about approved lists of drugs, search for 'pharmacopoeia' in Word(s) from the title **or** Word(s) from the content.

For papers about lecture series, either the notes of students or the lecturers, search for 'lecture' **and** 'notes' in Word(s) from the title.

SEARCHING FOR NON-INSTITUTIONAL RECORDS

(cf Word(s) from the title, Word(s) from the content, Person/institution and Archive creator)

For the most important medieval hand written books in the collection, search for 'Ker' **and** 'medieval' in Word(s) from the content.

For domestic medicine manuals etc., search for 'recipe' **or** 'receipt' in Word(s) from the title **and** 'file' in Level of description.

For papers on the plague, search for 'plague' **and not** 'cattle' in Word(s) from the title.

For records of general medical practice, such as post mortem illustrations or patient treatment over the centuries, the best method is to combine a range of terms for a fuller search.

E.g. 'post mortem' **or** 'patient' **or** 'prescription' in Word(s) from the title **or** Word(s) from the content.

For the non-european archive items, search for 'MSTR' in Reference **and** file in Level of description.

The personal collections of members highlight their personal and/or professional life.

To search for records of individuals, the best method is to combine the two searches below.

1 - Search for all collections under 'MS-A' or B or C etc. in Reference.

E.g. MS-HARVW is the reference for William Harvey, discoverer of the circulation of the blood
Click on the + symbol in the hierarchy browser to see all the items in each individual collection

2 - Search for 'Surname, Forename' in Archive creator (this brings up everything in this person's collection, everything in the institutional records, and any letters written by them which are in the letter collection)

E.g. 'Jenner, E' will bring up all items produced by Edward Jenner, an early vaccination pioneer
'Anderson' will bring up all items produced by Elizabeth Garrett-Anderson

Where a source has supplied the catalogue reference numbers, use them as the search terms in Reference.

E.g. ENV1, ALS/A1, MS1, MSTR