National Library of Scotland
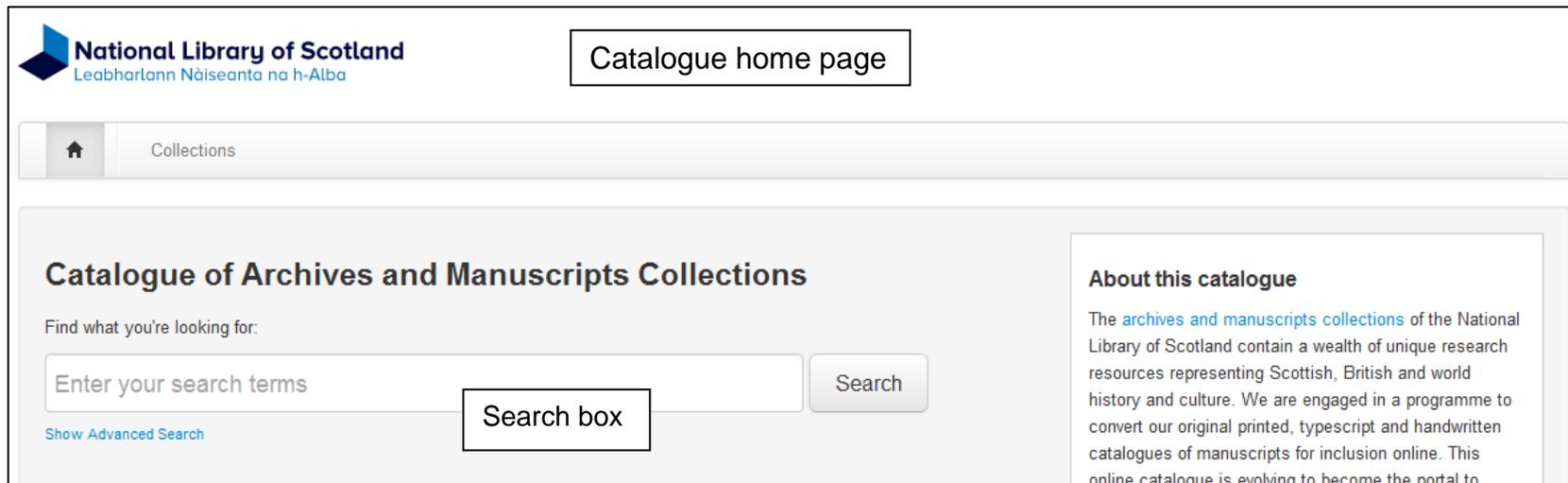Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba

Guidance for use of the Catalogue of Archives and Manuscripts Collections

The online catalogue of manuscripts is in development. Fuller functionality will become available as that development continues. In the meantime there may be some quirks but the catalogue has been made available now because it contains in a single location descriptions of a significant amount of the manuscript content in the Library's collections. The descriptions include those being added through our continuing manuscripts finding aids retro-conversion programme.

In making the catalogue available in this interim condition the emphasis is on keyword searching. Name headings have been concealed as *primary* search options at this stage but will be exposed in due course.

Searching

When you land on the catalogue home page (shown below) a single search box is shown. This can be used to search for known titles, collection names, reference numbers and constructed (Boolean) searches (e.g. "Thomas" AND "Carlyle" AND "Letters").

Catalogue home page

National Library of Scotland
Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba

🏠 | Collections

Catalogue of Archives and Manuscripts Collections

Find what you're looking for:

Enter your search terms   Search

Search box

Show Advanced Search

About this catalogue

The archives and manuscripts collections of the National Library of Scotland contain a wealth of unique research resources representing Scottish, British and world history and culture. We are engaged in a programme to convert our original printed, typescript and handwritten catalogues of manuscripts for inclusion online. This online catalogue is evolving to become the portal to

You should enclose search terms in double quote marks " ". You can enter single words as search terms, e.g. "Manuscript" "journal", a statement, e.g. "typescript of a play", or a combination of both. If you search on a statement the search will act on that specific arrangement of words.

If searching for the name of a person either enter the name in direct order, e.g. "Thomas Carlyle", or in indirect order in the following form, "Carlyle, Thomas". The name in indirect order will search more effectively on formal name headings used as access terms (authority headings). Enter corporate and family names in direct order.

When searching for a known reference number ensure that the number is enclosed in double quotes, e.g "MS.1234". A reference number *can* be searched on just the number element, e.g. "1234", but this will bring up all instances of that number sequence not just the one you are hoping to see. It is always better to include the full reference number, including the prefix, e.g. "MS.1234"; "Acc.10100"; "Dep.98"; "Adv.MS.19.2.1".

Advanced search

The single search box on the home page can be expanded to an advanced search feature (see below) through a link, 'Show advanced search', which is under the single search box.

National Library of Scotland
Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba

🏠 | Collections

Catalogue of Archives and Manuscripts Collections

Find what you're looking for:

[Enter your search terms] [Search]

Show Advanced Search

About this catalogue

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Use this link to expand the search options

Expanded search options

Catalogue of Archives and Manuscripts Collections

Find what you're looking for:

[   ] [Keyword ▼]

[And ▼] [   ] [Keyword ▼]

[And ▼] [   ] [Keyword ▼]

[Search]

Hide Advanced Search

About this

The archives
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and collectior

Boolean search operators

Options to filter by particular entry points: Creator, Keyword, Notes, Subject, Title

Whichever search option is used for the initial search on the homepage the search results will appear similarly to those shown below.
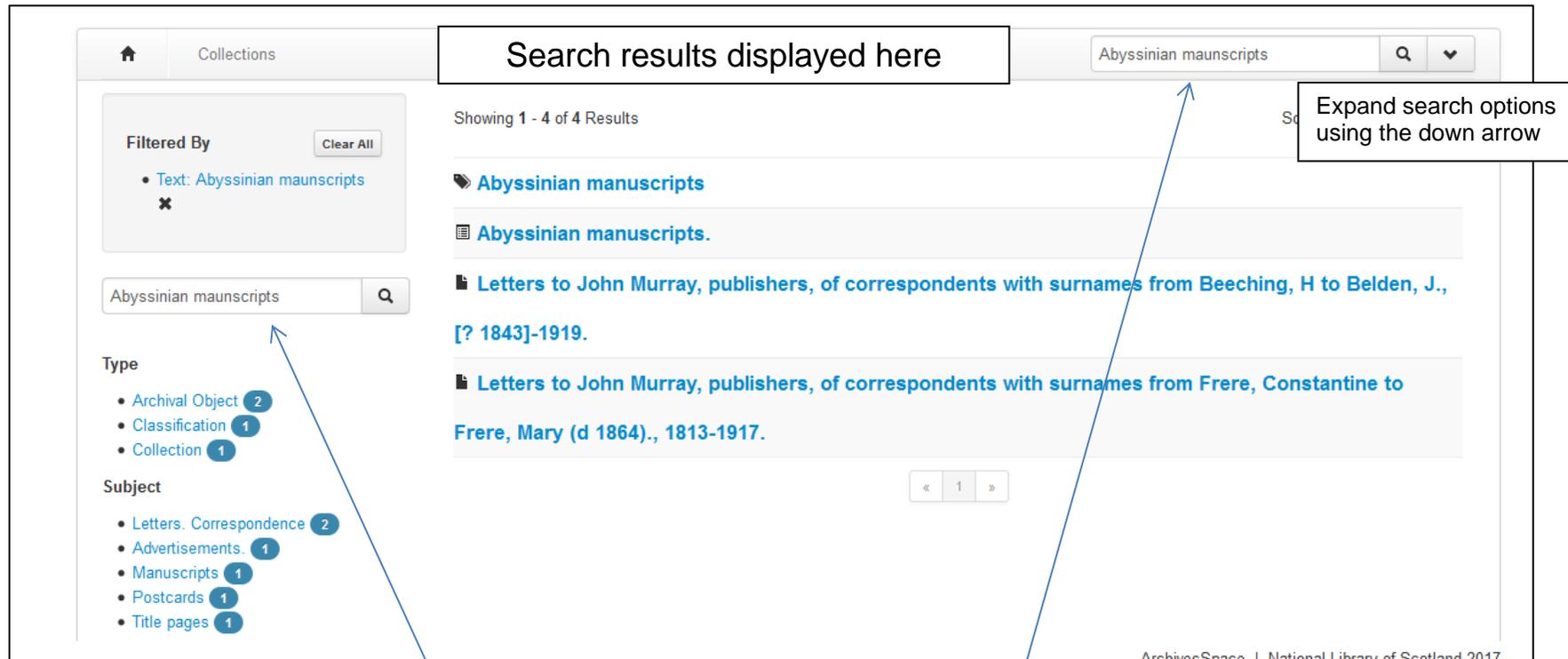
National Library of Scotland
Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba

Search results displayed here

Expand search options using the down arrow

Collections

Abyssinian maunscripts

Filtered By   Clear All

- Text: Abyssinian maunscripts
  ✖

Abyssinian maunscripts   🔍

Type
- Archival Object 2
- Classification 1
- Collection 1

Subject
- Letters. Correspondence 2
- Advertisements. 1
- Manuscripts 1
- Postcards 1
- Title pages 1

Showing **1 - 4** of **4** Results

🏷 **Abyssinian manuscripts**

📖 **Abyssinian manuscripts.**

📄 **Letters to John Murray, publishers, of correspondents with surnames from Beeching, H to Belden, J., [? 1843]-1919.**

📄 **Letters to John Murray, publishers, of correspondents with surnames from Frere, Constantine to Frere, Mary (d 1864)., 1813-1917.**

« 1 »

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Note that for further searches the *single* search box is now on the left, the *advanced* search at the top right of the screen. The advanced search box can be expanded through the down arrow.
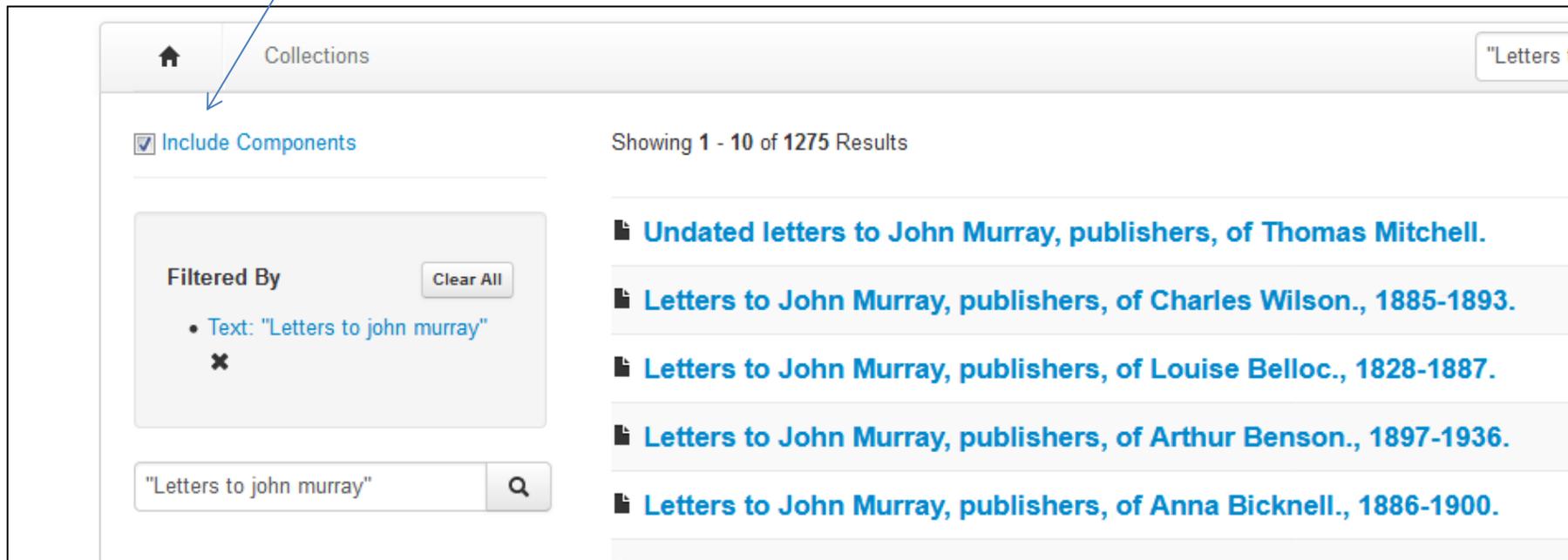
Search results

Individual entries in a search result set will be accompanied by a graphic which indicates the type of record. If you hover the mouse over the graphic a pop-up will state the record type. The most common are:

- a *label* = classification = a collection name. Note, most collection names are not linked currently but are being linked by stages. The unlinked collection names have been included because they are indicative of our collections and may help you when formulating further searches, either in the on-line catalogue or using the more traditional finding aids.

- an *inventory* = a 'collection'. This will be either the description in a single record of a single resource, with no other associated resources, or the highest level description in a records hierarchy. A records hierarchy is formed when associated records are linked to represent the arrangement of a collection or archive, that arrangement can then be shown in a 'tree' structure.

- a *letter* = a component record of a records hierarchy. Such records could be structural (series, sub-series) within the hierarchy, e g. describing a group of associated records rather than a specific resource, or a record for a specific resource.

- a *silhouette of a head and shoulders* = a person name entry

- a *silhouette of two people* = a family name entry.

- a *briefcase* = a corporate name heading.

Search filtering

There are various filtering options on the left side of the result display. These allow you to narrow down a search by filtering on particular terms. Work is continuing to tidy-up the indexes, so this feature is imperfect currently. If used, remember to close filters when no longer required.

If you are using the single search box displayed to the left of the results display be aware that if no results are returned you should also tick the 'Include Components' box, if it is shown above the search box. This will ensure that all records have been searched.

The records

Each entry in the results display is a link. When you select a title from the results display the description will be presented in a scrollable display.

If the selected record is a description of a single resource the complete description will be shown as a single instance.

If the selected result is of a collection or archive a component record tree will be available. The tree is shown at the bottom of the open record under the heading 'Components', as shown below.

The '+' sign next to a component record in the tree can be used to expand the tree to show additional component records. The tree can be contracted by using the '-' minus sign that replaces the '+' sign after the tree has been expanded.
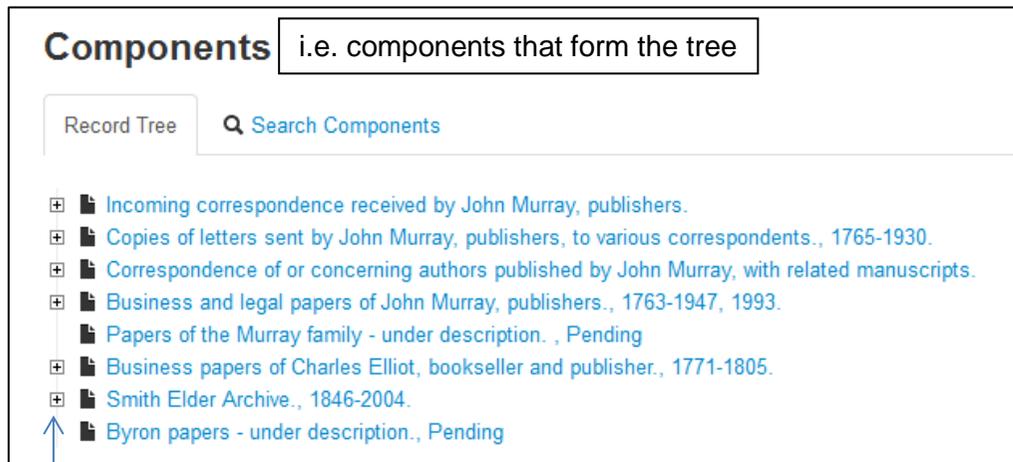
**Components** | i.e. components that form the tree

Example of a record from the description of an archive showing part of the 'tree'

Record Tree   🔍 Search Components

⊞ 📄 Incoming correspondence received by John Murray, publishers.
⊞ 📄 Copies of letters sent by John Murray, publishers, to various correspondents., 1765-1930.
⊞ 📄 Correspondence of or concerning authors published by John Murray, with related manuscripts.
⊞ 📄 Business and legal papers of John Murray, publishers., 1763-1947, 1993.
   📄 Papers of the Murray family - under description. , Pending
⊞ 📄 Business papers of Charles Elliot, bookseller and publisher., 1771-1805.
⊞ 📄 Smith Elder Archive., 1846-2004.
   📄 Byron papers - under description., Pending

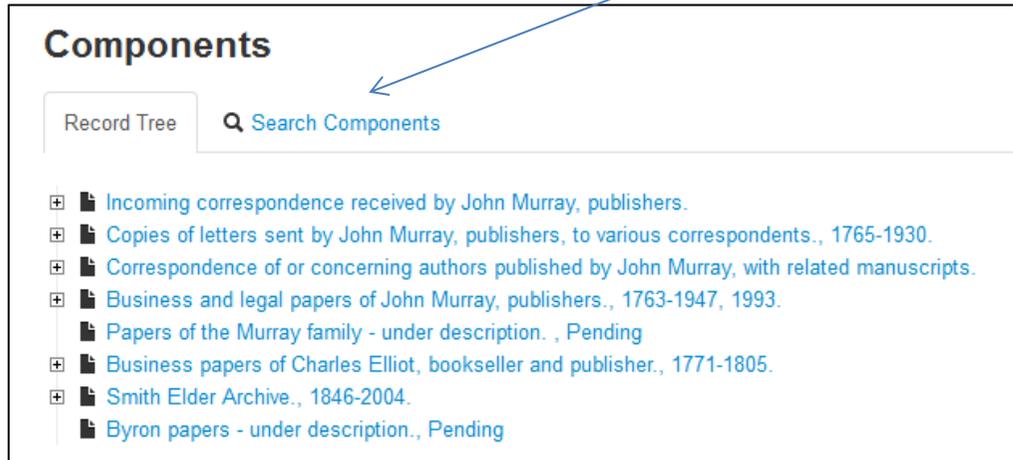Component records can be expanded by clicking the '+' sign

As you navigate through the tree another set of links is displayed at the head of the record, the links increasing as you navigate into the tree. These links can be used to move up through the tree to previous levels.
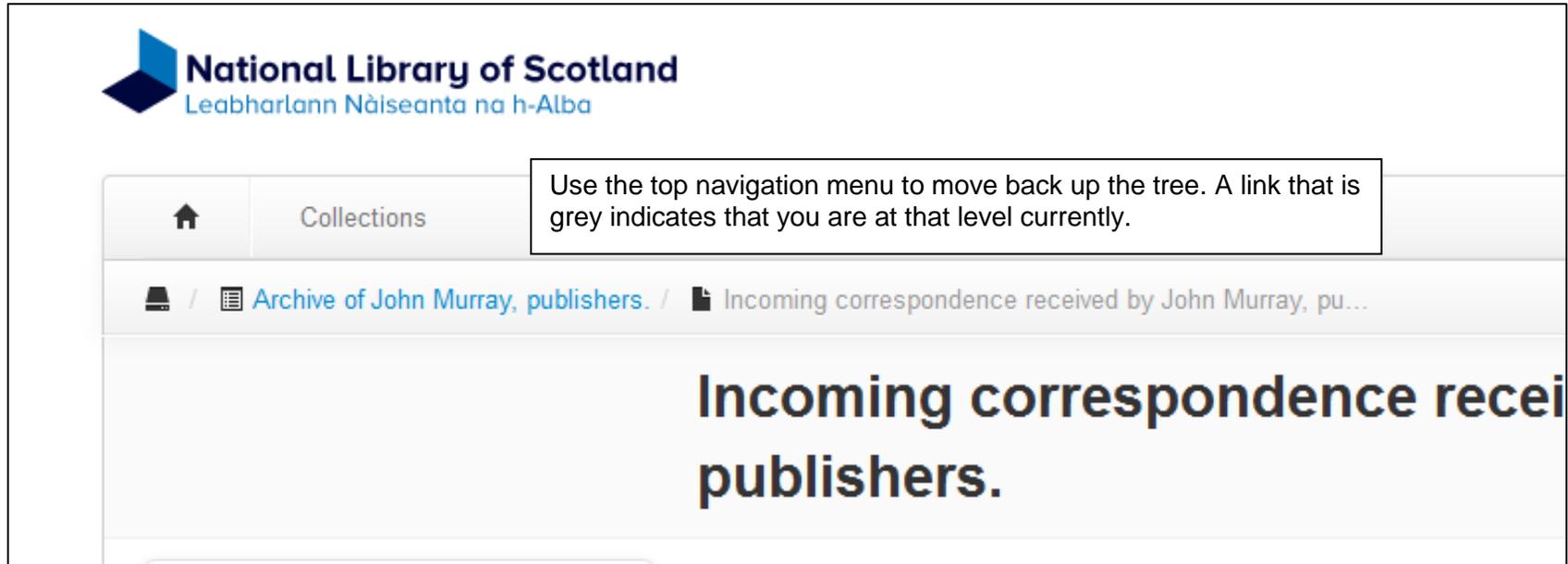
Use the top navigation menu to move back up the tree. A link that is grey indicates that you are at that level currently.

Searching component records

The component tree can be searched under the 'Search Components' tab.

The 'Record Tree' tab is shown when a record is first opened, but selecting the 'Search Components' tab will display a search box that can be used to search the component records only.
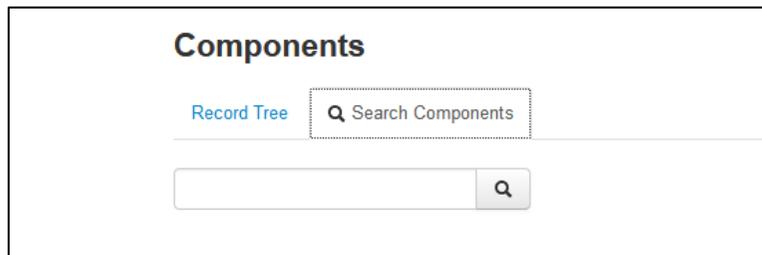
Side menu

On the left side of each displayed record is a menu that can be used to navigate to specific descriptive areas of that particular record.

As regards the menu, please note particularly:

- 'Agent links' means people, families or corporate bodies involved in the origination or creation of the described resource.

- 'Subjects' includes not only topical subject headings (e.g. the name of a battle), but also genre terms (the form of a document) and geographic headings.

- 'Notes' means content description additional to the title. Such notes are segmented according to particular characteristics: e.g.

    - scope and content – more information on the content of the resource
    - arrangement – a description of the arrangement of the resource
    - conditions governing access – notes on any restrictions on access that may apply

- External documents. Where available, links to additional information about the described resource, particularly:
    - inventories of accessions (also available through the on-line 'Guide to manuscript collections')
    - links to descriptions of printed books in the collections which include manuscript content.

Requesting manuscripts

The on-line catalogue of manuscripts does not include currently an automated manuscript request feature. Manuscripts should be requested as follows.

- Through the Special Collections Reading Room, by submitting a request slip.

- Remotely, either by email or by phone, supplying the following information:

  - Title of the resource
  - Identifier/Component Unique Id – this is displayed immediately below the title of the resource
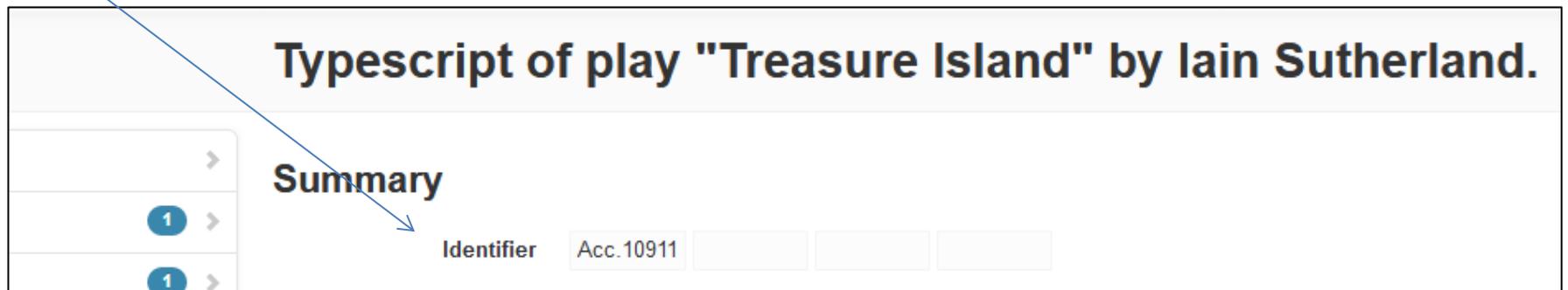
  - Your name
  - Your reader ticket number
  - The date you would like to see the resource