



Forums

User Guide

Published by: Stedman Cousins

Author: Tom O'Dea

Editor: Ruth O'Dea

Date Created: 19 Dec 2008

Date Updated: 31 Dec 2008



Contents

1. What is the Purpose of This Facility?.....	3
1.1. Key Points	3
1.2. How the Forums are Organised.....	4
2. Terms and Concepts	5
2.1. Terms	5
3. What Functions are Available?	7
3.1. Information Displayed.....	7
3.2. User Options.....	7
3.3. Forum Actions	8
4. Who Uses This Facility?	9
4.1. User Groups	9
4.2. Forum Categories.....	9
4.3. Forum Access Rights	9
4.3.1. Public Forum Permissions.....	9
4.3.2. Private Forum Permissions	10
4.3.3. Locked Topics	10
5. When is This Facility Needed?	11
6. How Do I Use This Facility?.....	12
6.1. Accessing the Forums Page.....	12
6.2. Forums Page.....	12
7. Where Do I Go for Help?	13
7.1. Errors and Omissions	13
7.2. Questions	13
7.3. Comments and Suggestions	13
7.4. System Problems	13
7.5. Related Documents	14

List of Figures

Figure 1: Forum Hierarchy.....	4
Figure 2: Sample Forums Page	12

List of Tables

Table 1: Things You Need to Know	3
Table 2: Definition of Terms.....	6
Table 3: Definition of Forum Actions.....	8
Table 4: Actions by User Group – Public Forums	10
Table 5: Actions by User Group – Private Forums.....	10
Table 6: Related Documents	14



1. What is the Purpose of This Facility?

This facility enables the user to access the set of Forums that are available on the Stedman Cousins Web Site and to participate in one or more Forum discussions.

Once the list of Forums has been displayed, the user can select a particular Forum of interest, view the topics within that Forum and select a particular topic of interest.

Depending on the user's access rights, the user will then be able to:

- Start a new discussion by creating a new Topic.
- Reply to a Post that a user has created within a Forum Topic.
- Modify a Post the user has created within a Forum.
- Delete a Post the user has created within a Forum.
- Create a Poll about a particular subject and invite users to vote in that Poll. (In most cases, authority to add a Poll belongs to the Web Site administrators.)
- Record a vote in a Poll about a particular subject.
- Attach a file to a Forum Post the user has created.

Posts by Registered Users or Stedman Cousins Members are published when submitted by the user. Anonymous Users no longer have update access to the Forums on the Stedman Cousins Web Site. This policy has been introduced because of the large volume of anonymous postings of inappropriate and offensive material.

There are two types of Forums:

1. Public Forums.
2. Private Forums.

The **Public Forums** can be accessed by all users. The **Private Forums** can only be accessed by Stedman Cousins Members.

1.1. Key Points

A summary of the key points covered in this document is shown in Table 1.

Item	Reference
1. How the Forums are organised	Section 1.2 on page 4.
2. Terms used in this document.	Section 2.1 on page 5.
3. The information presented to the user, the options available to the user and the possible actions that may be performed by the user.	Section 3 on page 7.
4. Forum access rights.	Section 4.3 on page 9.
5. How to access the Forums Page.	Section 6.1 on page 12.
6. Where to go for help and where to find additional information.	Section 7 on page 13.

Table 1: Things You Need to Know



1.2. How the Forums are Organised

The Forums are organised in a hierarchy as shown in Figure 1.

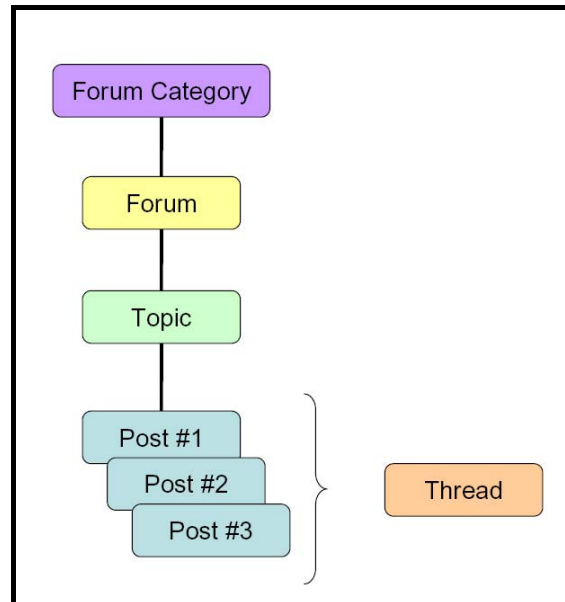


Figure 1: Forum Hierarchy

Notes:

1. **Forum Category** – Public or Private.
2. **Forum** – Within each category there will be one or more Forums. Each Forum has a name. Examples include:
 - Stedman Genealogy Queries.
 - Web Site - FAQ Facility.
 - Web Site - What's New.

A Forum may be sub-divided into Sub-Forums. A Forum name is created by the Stedman Cousins Web Site administrators. If there is a need for a new Forum, please contact the Web Site administrators. This can be done using the **Contact Us** facility.

3. **Topic** – Within each Forum there will be one or more topics. Each topic has a title. A topic represents a new discussion Thread.
4. **Post** – Within each topic there will be one or more Posts. When a topic is created, the first entry represents the initial Post, i.e. the start of a discussion Thread. Users can contribute to the discussion by adding new Posts to the Thread. A user may be able to attach a file as part of a Post.

A Forum will have a Moderator who will review items posted to the Forum. If the Moderator decides that an item posted to a Forum is inappropriate, the item will be amended or deleted.

If a user finds a Forum Post that is thought to be inappropriate, the user can bring this to the attention of the Moderator by reporting the Post using the **Forums - Report a Post** facility.



2. Terms and Concepts

This section provides a definition of the terms and concepts used in this document.

2.1. Terms

Term	Definition
Anonymous User	A Web Site user who is just visiting, i.e. a Guest.
Stedman Cousins Member	A user who has applied for membership of the Stedman Cousins and has paid the appropriate membership fee.
FAQ	FAQ is an acronym for "Frequently Asked Question(s)". The term refers to listed questions and answers, all supposed to be frequently asked in some context, and pertaining to a particular topic.
Forum	An Internet forum is a web application for holding discussions and posting user generated content. Internet forums are also commonly referred to as Web forums, message boards, discussion boards, (electronic) discussion groups, discussion forums, bulletin boards, fora (the Latin plural) or simply forums.
Help Desk	The Help Desk provides the users with a central point for help on various issues in using the Web Site. The user notifies the help desk of his or her issue, and the system issues a Ticket that has details of the problem. This enables the Web Site administrators to manage the issues through to resolution.
Home Page	The homepage (often written as home page) or main page is the front page, webserver directory index, or main web page of a website of a group, company, organisation, or individual.
Moderator	A Moderator is a person granted special powers to enforce the rules of an Internet forum (message board). Almost all moderators on all forums can move discussions to different sections of the forum, close discussions, edit the content of individual postings, answer questions (or help people with problems), and 'stick' discussions so they remain visible in their forum section even if no new postings are made to them. Different forums may give their moderators further powers, such as being able to block/ban people from the message board.
Post	An entry in an Internet forum (message board).
Registered User	A user who has registered with the Stedman Cousins Web Site by providing basic information including a userid and a valid e-mail address. There is no fee required.
Thread	A threaded discussion is an electronic discussion (such as one via e-mail, e-mail list, bulletin board, newsgroup, conference or Internet forum) in which the software aids the user by visually grouping messages. Messages are usually grouped visually in a hierarchy by topic. A set of messages



Term	Definition
	grouped in this way is called a topic thread or simply "thread".
Topic	The focus of a discussion or debate.

Table 2: Definition of Terms



3. What Functions are Available?

This section provides an outline of the functions available on the Forums Page.

The Forums Page allows the user to access the set of Forums that are available on the Stedman Cousins Web Site and to participate in one or more Forum discussions.

3.1. Information Displayed

The following information is displayed in the list of Forums:

- **Forum Name** – This is the name of the Forum.
- **Moderator** – This shows the name(s) of the users who are Moderators for the Forum.
- **Topics** – This shows the number of Topics within the Forum.
- **Posts** – This shows the total number of Posts within the Forum.
- **Last Post** – This shows the date and time the last Post was made to the Forum and the name of the user who made that Post.

3.2. User Options

Once the list of Forums has been displayed, the user can then:

- Select a particular Forum of interest.
- Search for topics within a Forum.
- View the topics within a Forum.
- Select a particular topic of interest.
- View the entries that have been posted as part of that discussion.

Depending on the user's permissions, the user will then be able to perform certain actions within the selected Forum.



3.3. Forum Actions

Definitions of the possible actions that may be available to a user are shown in Table 3.

Action	If a user has permission to perform this Action	If a user does not have permission to perform this Action
Can View	The user can view Posts within the Forum.	The user cannot view Posts within the Forum.
Can start new topics	The user can start a new discussion by creating a new Topic.	The user cannot start a new discussion by creating a new Topic.
Can Reply	The user can reply to a Post that a user has created within a Forum Topic.	The user cannot reply to a Post that a user has created within a Forum Topic.
Can Edit	The user can modify the Post the user has created within a Forum. Users will be able to edit their own Post but not Posts made by other users.	The user cannot modify the Post the user has created within a Forum.
Can Delete	The user can delete the Post the user has created within a Forum. Users will be able to delete their own Post but not Posts made by other users.	The user cannot delete the Post the user has created within a Forum.
Can Add Poll	The user can create a Poll about a particular subject and invite users to vote in that Poll. In most cases, authority to add a Poll belongs to the Web Site administrators.	The user cannot create a Poll about a particular subject and invite users to vote in that Poll.
Can Vote	The user can record a vote in a Poll about a particular subject.	The user cannot record a vote in a Poll about a particular subject.
Can Attach	The user can attach a file to a Forum Post the user has created.	The user cannot attach a file to a Forum Post the user has created.
Can Post without Approval	The Forum Post will be published when submitted by the user.	The Forum Post will be reviewed and approved by the Web Site administrator before publication.

Table 3: Definition of Forum Actions



4. Who Uses This Facility?

This section explains what particular user groups can and cannot do on the Forums Page.

The Forums Page is used by Registered Users, Stedman Cousins Members or Anonymous Users who wish to access the set of Forums that are available on the Stedman Cousins Web Site and to participate in one or more Forum discussions.

4.1. User Groups

There are four main User Groups:

1. Anonymous Users.
2. Registered Users.
3. Financial Members.
4. Honorary Members.

Each Group has certain access rights to information in the Forums and can perform certain actions within each Forum.

4.2. Forum Categories

There are two types of Forums:

1. Public Forums.
2. Private Forums.

The **Public Forums** can be accessed by all users. The **Private Forums** can only be accessed by Stedman Cousins Members.

4.3. Forum Access Rights

The Actions available to a user will depend upon the permissions that have been defined for a particular Forum and a particular User Group. Although there may be different User Group permissions for different Forums, the permissions will be much the same for most Forums within each category.

4.3.1. Public Forum Permissions

The permissions used for most Public Forums are shown in Table 4.

Action	Anonymous Users	Registered Users	Financial Members/ Honorary Members
Can View	Yes	Yes	Yes
Can start new topics	No (see Note 1)	Yes	Yes
Can Reply	No (see Note 1)	Yes	Yes
Can Edit	No	Yes	Yes



Action	Anonymous Users	Registered Users	Financial Members/ Honorary Members
Can Delete	No	Yes	Yes
Can Add Poll	No	No	No
Can Vote	No	Yes	Yes
Can Attach	No	Yes	Yes
Can Post without Approval	No	Yes	Yes

Table 4: Actions by User Group – Public Forums

Note:

1. Anonymous Users no longer have update access to the Forums on the Stedman Cousins Web Site. This policy has been introduced because of the large volume of anonymous postings of inappropriate and offensive material.

4.3.2. Private Forum Permissions

The permissions used for most Private Forums are shown in Table 5.

Action	Anonymous Users	Registered Users	Financial Members/ Honorary Members
Can View	No	No	Yes
Can start new topics	No	No	Yes
Can Reply	No	No	Yes
Can Edit	No	No	Yes
Can Delete	No	No	Yes
Can Add Poll	No	No	Yes
Can Vote	No	No	Yes
Can Attach	No	No	Yes
Can Post without Approval	No	No	Yes

Table 5: Actions by User Group – Private Forums

4.3.3. Locked Topics

If a Forum topic has been locked by the Web site administrators, users can only view the topic.



5. When is This Facility Needed?

This section describes the situations where the user needs to make use of the Forums Page.

The Forums Page is needed when a user wishes to access the set of Forums that are available on the Stedman Cousins Web Site and to participate in one or more Forum discussions.

The need for this arises because a user wishes to:

- Seek answers to questions of a genealogical nature.
- Ask a question of a genealogical nature.
- Discuss a subject of a genealogical nature.
- Seek answers to questions about the Stedman Cousins Web Site.
- Ask a question about the Stedman Cousins Web Site.
- Discuss matters relating to the use of the Stedman Cousins Web Site.



6. How Do I Use This Facility?

This section describes the steps required to perform each function available on the Forums Page.

6.1. Accessing the Forums Page

To access the Forums Page, you simply select the **Forums** item on the Main Menu. The system will display the Forums Page. This page will show a list of the Forums that have been defined by the Web Site administrators.

If there is a need for a new Forum, please contact the Web Site administrators. This can be done using the **Contact Us** facility.

6.2. Forums Page

An example of a Forums Page is shown in Figure 2.

From this page, the user has access to these options:

1. Select one of the Forums by clicking on the name of the Forum.
2. Search the Forums by selecting the **Search** option.

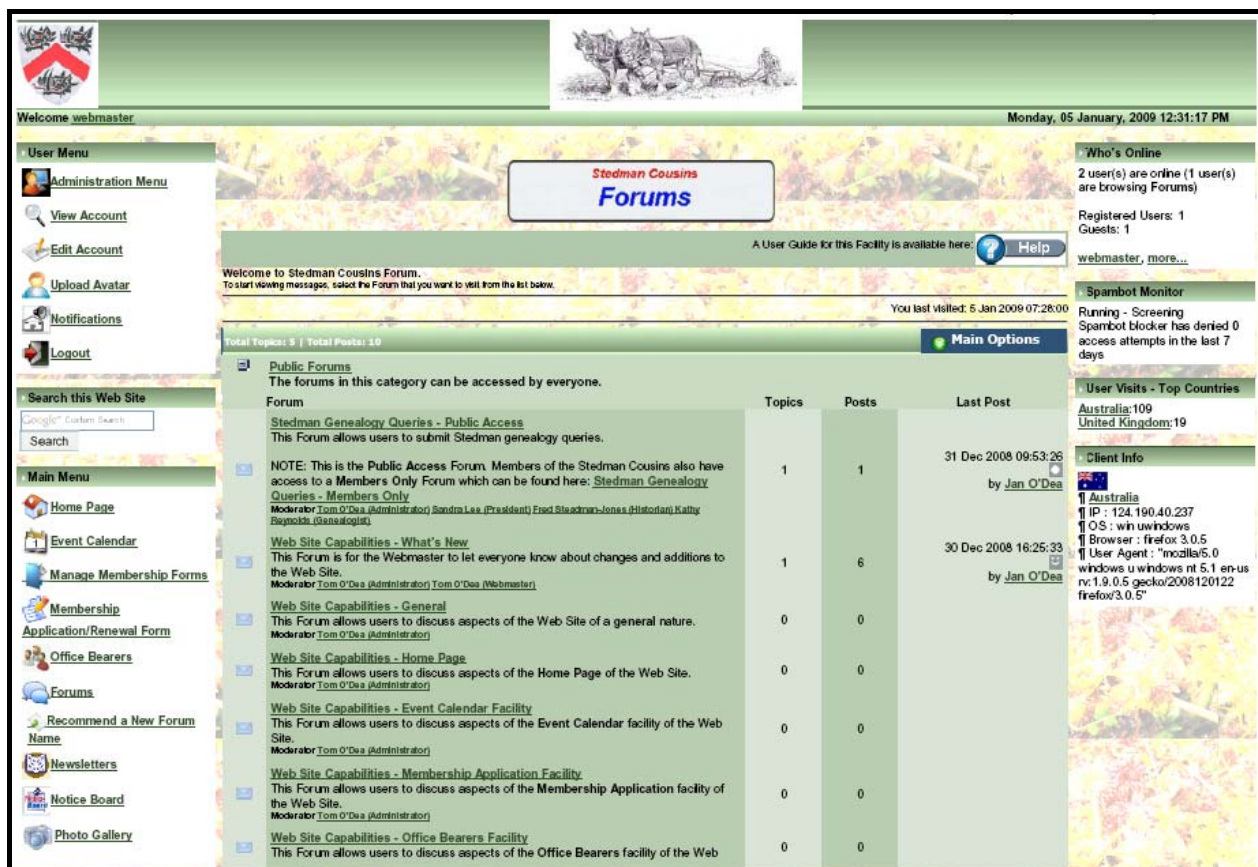


Figure 2: Sample Forums Page



7. Where Do I Go for Help?

This section explains what to do if you find errors or omissions, if you have questions, if you have comments or suggestions, or if you have problems using the Web Site.

7.1. *Errors and Omissions*

If there are any errors or omissions in this document, please use the **Help Desk** facility on this Web Site to report the problem. A *Ticket* will be opened in your name so that the administrators can manage the problem through to resolution.

7.2. *Questions*

If you have any questions about the information in this document, please use the **FAQ** facility on this Web Site. By searching the set of FAQs you may find the information you are looking for. If you cannot find the answer to your question, please submit your question using the **FAQ** facility so the administrators can respond.

7.3. *Comments and Suggestions*

If you have any comments about the functions provided by this Facility or if you have suggestions for improvement, please use the **Forums** facility on this Web Site. This will enable the administrators and other users to respond to your comments.

7.4. *System Problems*

If you encounter an error when using this Facility, please use the **Help Desk** facility on this Web Site to report the problem. A *Ticket* will be opened in your name so that the administrators can manage the problem through to resolution.



7.5. Related Documents

A list of related User Guides is shown in Table 6.

To find out how to	Refer to this User Guide
Find information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Stedman Cousins' aims and pursuits. • News about recent activities (e.g. the latest publications of the Stedman Cousins Newsletter). • News about forthcoming events. • News about the latest Forum topics. • News about the latest FAQ items. • The latest Forums. 	Home Page - User Guide.pdf
Access Stedman Cousins Web Site facilities through the User Menu and the Main Menu.	Home Page - User Guide.pdf
Access the site-wide search facility.	Home Page - User Guide.pdf
Access the set of Forums that are available on the Stedman Cousins Web Site and participate in one or more Forum discussions.	Forums - User Guide.pdf (this document)
View a list of Topics within a Forum in order to find a Topic of interest or create a new Topic.	Forums - View Forum - User Guide.pdf
View a particular Topic within a Forum.	Forums - View Topic - User Guide.pdf
Create a new Topic within a Forum.	Forums - New Topic - User Guide.pdf
Add a Post to a discussion thread within an existing Topic.	Forums - Reply to a Post - User Guide.pdf
Edit a Post the user has previously added to a Forum Topic.	Forums - Edit a Post - User Guide.pdf
Delete a Post the user has previously added to a Forum Topic.	Forums - Delete a Post - User Guide.pdf
Report a Post within a Forum Topic as inappropriate.	Forums - Report a Post - User Guide.pdf
Search for Topics within one or more Forums.	Forums - Search - User Guide.pdf

Table 6: Related Documents