

Genealogical Computing Group

Convenor's Annual Report – AGM 2026

From the Convenor

It has been another active and productive year for the Genealogical Computing Group, with a strong focus on adapting to changing member needs, embracing new technology, and strengthening our role within the wider genealogy community.

Key Highlights of the Past Year

40th Anniversary Celebration

A major milestone this year was our **40th Anniversary**, celebrated with a well-attended and highly successful luncheon.

It was a pleasure to reconnect with long-standing and past members, reflect on our shared history, and recognise the contribution the Group has made over four decades—from the early days of home computing through to today's digital and AI-driven research tools.

Expo Participation and Direction

We continued our strong involvement in the **NZSG Expo**, including sponsorship and active participation.

Following careful consideration, the committee made the strategic decision to:

- Step back from organising the Expo
- Continue supporting it through sponsorship and presence

This allows us to focus more directly on our core mission:

Supporting members in the effective use of technology for genealogy

Programme Development and Meetings

Throughout the year, we delivered a mix of:

- Guest speakers (including national institutions)
- Workshops and Q&A sessions
- Hybrid and Zoom-enabled meetings

Feedback highlighted a growing preference for:

- **Hands-on learning**
 - **Practical problem-solving sessions**
 - Topics such as **AI, DNA, and digital tools**
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New Strategic Direction

Based on member feedback and committee planning, we are shifting towards a more **interactive and skills-focused programme**, including:

- Hands-on workshops (AI, DNA, tools)
- “Brickwall” problem-solving sessions
- Member-led “share and learn” discussions
- Reduced reliance on formal speakers (targeting one every 6 months)

This reflects a move from **presentation-based learning** → **active participation and support**

Membership and Engagement

- Membership numbers have remained steady, with some growth
- Engagement varies between online and in-person formats
- A renewed focus is being placed on:
 - Understanding member skills and interests
 - Encouraging greater participation
 - Identifying hidden expertise within our membership

Communications and Resources

Significant progress has been made in:

- **Newsletter continuity**, with a new editor in place
- Expanding website capability and performance
- Improving access to resources and past content

We are also exploring:

- Easier online access to meetings and materials
 - Enhanced communication channels
 - Digital tools to support member learning
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Financial Overview

The Group remains in a **sound financial position**, enabling us to:

- Support events such as the Anniversary celebration
 - Invest in equipment and technology
 - Sponsor key events (including the Expo)
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Looking Ahead

The year ahead will focus on:

- Delivering more **hands-on, practical learning opportunities**
- Expanding **virtual and hybrid engagement**
- Exploring **outreach opportunities**
- Continuing to evolve alongside emerging technologies such as **AI in genealogy**

Most importantly, we will continue to ask:

What do our members need—and how can we best support them?

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank:

- Our **committee members** for their ongoing dedication
- Our **volunteers**, particularly around Expo and events
- Our **speakers and contributors**
- And all our **members**, whose participation and support keep the Group active and relevant

Closing Remarks

From letters and microfiche to cloud computing and artificial intelligence, our journey continues to evolve.

The Genealogical Computing Group remains well placed to help members navigate this ever-changing landscape—combining experience, curiosity, and a willingness to learn together.

I look forward to another year of growth, innovation, and shared discovery.

Alan Cobcroft

Convenor

Genealogical Computing Group