Newcastle Family History Society Inc.

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ABN: 43 533 036 199



Newsletter

Library Hours: Thurs: 1.00pm – 3.00pm **Sat:** 10.00am – 3.00pm

Meeting Times:

First Tuesday each month (Feb to Nov) Feb, Mar, Oct, Nov at 7.30 pm Apr to Sep at 2.00 pm

Number 250

WANTED FOR YOUR JOURNAL—see page 7

The theme for our December Journal 252 is: **Heroism Part 2**

Deadline for articles: Saturday 24 October 2025

September 2025

August General Meeting

Tuesday 2 September—2.00 pm

Guest Speaker—Dr John Fluit Medical Progress in the 19th Century

Meeting will also be held via Zoom (see link below)

Our September meeting will be a very interesting presentation by Dr John Fluit. Diarise it now so you don't miss out.

In this talk Dr Fluit will be looking at what sick people were faced with at the start of the 19th century, and the major medical innovations and their impact throughout that century. These ranged from quack cures and bloodletting, to effective surgery, from brandy to ether as anaesthetic and from certain death from infections to survival on antibiotics and sterile operating conditions.

A question for everyone to ponder before the meeting: 'What are the two achievements or innovations, that over the history of mankind, have had the greatest impact on improving the health of the world's population?'

I look forward to seeing many members on the day.

If you would like to join by Zoom but feel you need some assistance, please contact our Secretary (email address above).

Mel Woodford (President)

Overview of August meeting

Our August meeting was extremely interesting. Benita Parker from the West Wallsend District Heritage Group, dressed in the era, took us back to the life of one of the earliest settlers in the 1860s to live in the shadow of Mount Sugarloaf. Back to a time of no roads, no cars, no electricity, no radios, no phones, and definitely no TVs. But there was plenty of bush. Benita's presentation told the story of Mary Johnston who came to Australia as a small child in 1849. Fascinatingly, Benita presented in the first person – Mary telling her own story – *From Bush to Bar*.

Mary was born in 1846 to Charles and Betsy Mounter in Somerset, England. Her parents were ordinary, hardworking, workingpeople. Charles class sometimes worked as a miner so when news filtered through that the AA Co in Australia was looking for coal miners, the family emigrated in 1849. They firstly lived in Hexham before later shifting to Wallsend.



When Mary was 14 in 1860, her father said it was time for her to get a job. So, she walked with her father into Newcastle where she had gained a position in a large hotel as a chambermaid. During her time at the hotel, she met a lovely Scotsman, William Johnston, who asked Mary's father for her hand in marriage. William worked at the Borehole Colliery in Newcastle. At the age of 17, on 2 May

1863, William and Mary were married at the minister's home. William was 37 at the time.

The day after the wedding, William and Mary set off from Wallsend in a horse and cart loaded with their

(Continued on page 2)

Zoom link for September meeting

Topic: September Monthly Meeting

Time: Sep 2, 2025 02:00 PM Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney

Join Zoom Meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89547773417? pwd=niZQClqbobX9ojfywMkaEwSeOBI8IY.1

Meeting ID: 895 4777 3417

Passcode: 970413

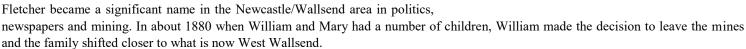
meagre possessions and some food staples for their new home at Appletree Flat. They travelled through wild virgin bush with huge trees and scrub, creeks and rocks everywhere.

When William and Mary arrived at Appletree Flat, William proudly showed Mary their first home, a home he had built.

William and Mary had 12 children over the period from 1864 to 1885, with one little girl, Lucy, only surviving to the age of four and one son, Alexander, passing away at the age of 21.

Some of their neighbours at the time were Joseph Notley, Joseph Holmes Snr, and Duncan Cherry.

During William's trip out to Australia, he met a young man, James Fletcher, also from Scotland. In 1852 they both went to the Bendigo Gold Rush hoping to make their fortune. Alas they didn't but they both then came to Newcastle and worked together in the Borehole Mine. They remained friends for life. James Fletcher became a significant name in the Newcastle/Wallsend area in politics.





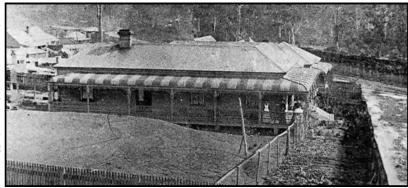
In 1888 William surprised Mary by showing her the *Museum Hotel* in West Wallsend which he had built. Eighteen months later he had built an extension out the back that included three shops, two halls and six accommodation rooms. Mary's experience in her first job as a chambermaid stood her in good stead to run a hotel. This photo of the hotel with the extension was taken by Ralph Snowball. William chose the name *Museum Hotel* because his daughter Margaret was an esteemed taxidermist. Many of her stuffed birds and animals were displayed throughout the hotel along with beautiful carpentry made by William and their son James who was a carpenter. People came from miles around to see the magnificent displays. One of Margaret's amazing pieces of work of a lyrebird is now in the new Sugar Valley Library Museum at Cameron Park.

William also showed his PR prowess by advertising in his friend James Fletcher's newspaper that he had a coach that would take people from the hotel to Cockle Creek where they could then take the train to either Sydney or Newcastle.

What else was happening in West Wallsend at the time? In 1891, a group of men built the Co-operative Store and then later built a string of brick buildings that sold everything you needed (still located in Withers Street, West Wallsend). You didn't need to leave West Wallsend. Mary did her shopping here.

In 1900 William decided it was time they retired from the hotel and the family moved into a beautiful home that William had built. Because of its proximity, William was able to sit on the verandah and see the hotel, the mine and the rail line.

William passed away in 1904 however Mary lived to see the opening of many new towns in the area such as O'Donnelltown, Fairley, Holmesville, Estelville, Barnsley and Northville. She also saw the first tramline arrive in West Wallsend in 1910, which was a joyous occasion following a long-fought battle to achieve this. It ran from Wallsend to West Wallsend basically following the same route as the current road. Mary,



who had lived a remarkable life, passed away in July 1918 while two of her sons were still overseas having signed up for World War I.

Thank you so much Benita for your wonderful presentation and also for dressing up in period attire.

To watch Benita's full presentation, click here or search for Newcastle Family History Society on YouTube. You won't be disappointed.

The photos are taken from Benita's presentation.

Lea Harris (with assistance from Benita Parker)



Left: Benita dressed in period clothing

Right: Benita wearing a beautiful hat and veil when she was talking about Mary's marriage



Photos courtesy of Mel Woodford

Volunteer Librarian's Handbook

Computers—Shutting Down

Last newsletter there was a slight error in the directions for shutting down the computer in the Reception area. Below is a copy of the notice that has been placed on the computer for reference.

Please ensure that this PC is SHUT DOWN using the correct Windows procedure.

1. Click the Windows START button
2. Click the SHUT DOWN button

Please DO NOT switch the power off at the wall until the PC has Shut Down.

Volunteer Librarian's Handbook continued

Photocopiers

Just a reminder that the big photocopier should NOT be used for photocopying for Library visitors. It has preset settings to print our Journals and Publications. Please use the scanner that is near the Management computer (the directions are on the wall above it printed on two sides to the laminated page) or if all else fails use the small computer in the meeting room which is often called the 'snippers' computer.

Shelf Place Markers

Please get into the habit of putting in a cardboard strip as a place marker when books are taken off the shelves for Library research or when 'On Loan'. It makes the job of returning books much easier.

Wifi Extender in Back Room

Did you know that the information and charges from the large photocopier in the back room are read remotely by CBTech using the wifi? The strength of this signal is unreliable so contrary to prior instruction where we stated the wife extender in the back room should be turned off when leaving the Library, we have found it should be permanently left ON. Please ensure you do not turn it off.

Any corrections or additions should be emailed to Jane on the nfspublicationsofficer@gmail.com email.

Jane Ison

Events and Outings

Future dates

2 September—2.00 pm—Monthly meeting—Dr John Fluit (see page 1)

12 to 14 September—State Conference—Wollongong (see page 5)

29 September—Mayfield Heritage Walk (see below)

7 October—7.30 pm—Monthly meeting

11 October—Library Orientation (Print)

17 October—Publications Meeting

18 October—Sandgate Cemetery Tour

25 October—Library Orientation (Digital)

4 November—7.30 pm—Monthly meeting

5 December—Christmas luncheon

18 December—Last day for Library for 2025

11 January—Spring cleaning at the rooms

15 January—Library re-opens for 2026

Every Monday (except public holidays) from 10.30 am—Coffee and Chat, Wests, Hobart Road, New Lambton. Anyone is welcome to attend. This is a great opportunity to have an informal catch-up with other members. Some great discussions occur about any number of family history topics.

Mayfield Heritage Walk

Monday 29 September 2025—10.00am (approx 1.5 hours duration)

Heritage Walk—The Toorak of Newcastle

Julie Keating will be leading us on a wonderful walk commencing from St Andrew's Church of England, Church Street, Mayfield. This walk will showcase some of the houses remaining from the large estates which were a feature of this suburb. Mayfield was known as the Toorak of Newcastle due to its idyllic location and large estates belonging to the commercial elite of Newcastle. Families such as the Winn Brothers, William Arnott, and John Scholey who subdivided some land and named it after his daughter May. Hence the name Mayfield was applied to the area after 1888.

Numbers will be limited to 22 so get your name down quickly by emailing Mel on nftspresident@gmail.com An enjoyable lunch will be held following the walk at Wests Mayfield, Industrial Drive. Book now with Mel. The walk is on fairly flat ground with a short hill at the end to return to the starting point.

State Conference 2025



Would you be interested in attending the

State Conference 2025

via Zoom at the NFHS rooms on

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 September?

This year our conference is being held in Wollongong. Some NFHS members will be attending in person, but others may find Zoom more convenient.

There are some fabulous speakers.

NFHS is once again offering to hold a mini-Conference in our rooms for \$20 per person if enough people are interested.

Details to attend in person or individually via Zoom can be found here.

Please email Mel on nfhspresident@gmail.com if you are interested in attending in the NFHS rooms.



New Members

We welcome the following new members to our Society and encourage you to enjoy your research in our Library. You are welcome to join any of our Special Interest Groups (SIG) to help with your research (see page 8).

#1368	Adel Firth-Mason	#1369	Michael Tanner
#1370	Lloyd Clark	#1371	Geoffrey Stannard
#1372	Karen Lonsdale	#1373	Jan McLeod
#1374	Cheryle Statham	#1375	Glenys Flegg
#0759	Peter Poole (rejoined)	#1120	Dean Barrett (rejoined)
#1324	Kathy Russell (rejoined)		

Ruth Sewell (Membership Registrar)

Library News

Date	Librarian 1 (get key)	Librarian 2					
Saturday Library Roster							
	Morning 9.45 am to 12.30 pm Afternoon 12.30 pm to 3.00 pm						
6 Sep am	Lea H	Sandra B					
6 Sep pm	Lea H	Sandra J					
13 Sep am	Library	closed due					
13 Sep pm	to State	Conference					
20 Sep am	Bert G	Paul K					
20 Sep pm	Bert G	Paul K					
27 Sep am	Marie H	Noelene L					
27 Sep pm	Marie H	Jude C					
Thursday	Library R	oster					
1.00 to 3.0	0 pm						
4 Sep	4 Sep Alison M Clelia P						
11 Sep	11 Sep Jane I Rosalie						
18 Sep	Marilyn M Jane I						
25 Sep Karen S Rosalie		Rosalie B					

Library Volunteers—Thanks

At this stage, we have a full roster for September. Thanks so much. Your time is very much appreciated.

Thanks so much to our volunteers. Without volunteers, we are unable to keep the rooms open for our members and visitors to continue with their family history research.

For future reference, when there are gaps, if you could spare three hours to assist to fill these gaps, please complete the volunteer form at this <u>link</u>.

Once again, thanks to our wonderful volunteers.

Mel Woodford (President)

Library Accession Register

Creator	Title	Call No
Simpson, Phillip	Historical guide to New South Wales [2020]	AN7/02/01
	Tales of old Merewether (& a few other places) [2006]	AH8.291/01/04

Paul Cooke (Co-Librarian)

Courses and Learning

Special Interest Groups

Members of the Society are welcome to join one or more groups and share their knowledge as well as learn something new. All the groups meet in the NFHS rooms, 68 Elder Street, Lambton, monthly at 10.00 am unless otherwise stated. Groups and contact details are below. Please email the facilitator to join a group.

Group Meeting date		Facilitator	Contact email
Family History Finder	y History Finder 1 st Tuesday		nfhsresearch78@gmail.com
Scottish Family Research	2 nd Tuesday – 1.00 pm—February to November	Mel Woodford	nfhspresident@gmail.com
English Ancestors	3 rd Tuesday	Karen Smith	abc26715@bigpond.net.au
DNA	3 rd Tuesday – 1.00 pm	Sandra Jones	sjones11@bigpond.net.au
Irish Ancestors	4 th Tuesday	Pat Healion	pat.healion1@gmail.com
Cemetery Research	1 st Thursday	Pat Healion	pat.healion1@gmail.com
Ancestry Users	2 nd Thursday—February to November—no meeting in September	Mel Woodford	nfhspresident@gmail.com
Scrapbooking	4 th Thursday	Karen Smith	abc26715@bigpond.net.au

Journal and Newsletter

December Journal (252)

The theme for the December Journal will be **Heroism Part 2**. Heroism can be dramatic and obvious, or private behind the scenes. It can involve a choice to make some form of sacrifice, or the overcoming of fear. What springs to mind when we hear the word? Military action or saving someone in distress are obvious responses, but there are so many others – the suffragists taking public action to gain universal suffrage; those setting aside personal ambitions to ensure success for their families. Do you know of people who fit your idea of heroism? Please write about them and share their stories. Please have them to the editor by **Saturday 25 October 2025**.

March Journal (253)

The theme of this Journal will be **Writer's Choice**. Always popular, this theme gives you the chance to share your writing on any topic related to family history – your research, family stories, houses – the list is endless. Please start thinking about what you might write – articles would need to be submitted by **Saturday 24 January 2026**.

Submission of Articles and Feedback

For all issues, and for any feedback to us, you can send your typed item to nfhseditor@gmail.com or deliver it to the Society library

addressed to the Editor. We can also accept handwritten items if that's your preference.

Journal and Newsletter Deadlines

	Newsletter	Journal
October	13 September	
November	11 October	
December	15 November	25 October
January	No newsletter	
February	10 January	
March	14 February	24 January
April	14 March	
May	11 April	
June	16 May	25 April
July	13 June	

Margaret Ashford (Editor, eTeam)

Publications

We have two face-to-face meetings each year - one in March and one in October. Our next meeting will be held on Friday 17 October. Until then we will 'meet' using email.

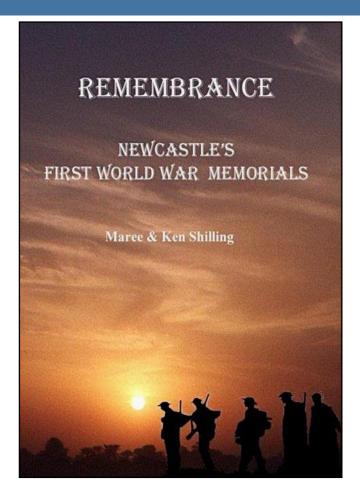
Please consider getting involved in these valuable projects as Publications benefit the Society financially and the community with the information we publish.

Thanks to our IT Officer, our publication *Remembrance* will soon be available on the website to download.

To view the Society's Publications, click on the Publications tab on our website or click here.

Jane Ison (Publications Coordinator)

Publications Group meets twice a year—dates advised as they are decided



Scottish newsletter

The next issue will be emailed on 28 November 2025, being the Scottish quarter day of Martinmas.

NFHS members are always welcome to send us an article to be included in the *Caledonian* by emailing it to the newsletter email below.

Reminder that if you would like to be included on the email list for this newsletter, please send an email to Lea on nfhsnewsletter@gmail.com.



Scottish SIG group

YouTube

Don't forget our guest speakers at our monthly meetings are recorded and the presentations can be viewed on the Society's YouTube channel. This is a fabulous way for those who are either distance members or just can't make it to the meeting, to be able to still enjoy our speakers. Or even if you were at the meeting, you may wish to listen to the presentation again.

To view these, either go to our Society webpage and click on the YouTube tab on the Home page, or type 'YouTube Newcastle Family History Society' into your search engine, or simply click here.

Mel Woodford (President)

Podcasts

General

Some more podcasts have been recorded since our last newsletter. I'm sure you will find them very interesting so click on the links below and enjoy listening.

Notable Novocastrians

This podcast is an extract from the February monthly meeting where Dr Jude Conway spoke about Zell Meehan. In 1950, Zell Meehan was appointed secretary to the Lord Mayor of Newcastle. In 1956, aged 37, Zell married and as was the custom of the time, was expected to resign. However, Zell refused to do so. To listen, click here.

Newcastle in the 1800s: From Penal Settlement to Coalopolis

In part 1 of this series, Society member Julie Keating takes us on a journey into the 19th century, when Newcastle evolved from a remote convict outpost into a thriving coal powerhouse — a true 'Coalopolis'. Julie digs into the mines, sails through treacherous harbours, and walks the streets laid out by early planners, revealing the people, places, and power struggles that shaped Newcastle. To listen, click <u>here</u>.

Second World War Links Between Newcastle and Portuguese Timor: A Forgotten Story?

In part 1 of this series, Society member and historian Dr Jude Conway relates a remarkable account of a little-known chapter of wartime history—one that spans the jungles of Timor, the city streets of Newcastle, and a camouflaged refugee camp at Bob's Farm. To listen, click here.

In part 2 of this series, we move to Australian soil where Dr Jude Conway uncovers the extraordinary events at Bob's Farm camp—where race, politics, and humanity collided in unexpected and lasting ways. To listen, click <u>here</u>.

Mel Woodford (President)

Miscellaneous

Email Addresses

President	nfhspresident@gmail.com
Vice-President	nfhsvicepresident@gmail.com
Secretary	nfhsinc@gmail.com
Treasurer	nfhstreasurer@gmail.com
Courses	nfhscourses@gmail.com
Events	nfhsevents@gmail.com
Journal	nfhseditor@gmail.com
Librarian	nfhslibrarian@gmail.com
Membership	nfhsmembership@gmail.com
Newsletter	nfhsnewsletter@gmail.com
Orientation sessions	nfhsorientation@gmail.com
Publications	nfhspublicationsof- ficer@gmail.com
Research	nfhsresearcher@gmail.com
Sandgate group	nfhssandgategroup@gmail.com
Used book sales	nfhslibrarian@gmail.com
Webmaster	nfhswebmaster@gmail.com

Snippers Group

Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesday from 10.00 am to 2.00 pm

Password for member area of website

The password for the Member area of our website:

Ancestors - Note: Ancestors has a capital A

Disclaimer

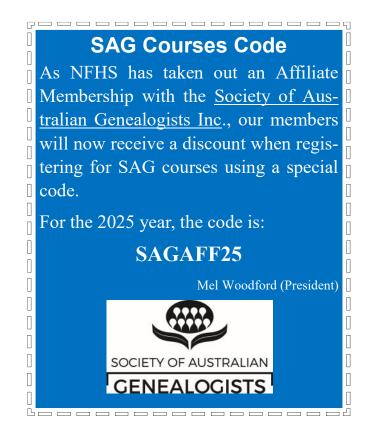
Although all reasonable care is taken, the Newcastle Family
History Society Inc. accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of information, which is printed in good faith from other
sources, or for any opinions expressed in this newsletter.



NFHS Banner

Our banner has been out of commission for some months but has now been repaired so it can be used again. You will need to use the narrower piece of dowel to put into the hole outside the Society rooms. Once that is safely in the metal hole, the banner can be slid over the dowel.

Many thanks to Bert for following up this problem.



Attachments to the newsletter

The following attachments are in the newsletter email

- Burwood and District Family History Group—Author talk history of Malvern Hill Estate—Saturday 6 September
- Burwood and District Family History Group—Malvern Hill Estate Historical Walks—Saturday 13 September
- Burwood and District Family History Group—St Thomas' Church and Cemetery Open Day—Saturday 13 September
- Yass Valley History Centre—Yass Graveside Yarns—Saturday 13 September
- Australian Historical Dance—Convict Culture Week at Port Macquarie—Saturday 25 October to Saturday 1 November—click on this <u>link</u> for more information

Some people meal prep on Sundays.

Some people soul search.

Some people... start exploring their family tree and somehow end up in 1872 with 14 open tabs.

September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Red—SIG Groups Blue—Volunteer Groups Green—Courses Purple—Meetings Black—Library Open Brown—Events	10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	10am—Family History Finder 12.30-1.55pm— Library open 2pm—General Meeting	10am-2pm— Snippers	10am—Cemetery SIG 1-3pm—Library open	9.30-12.00— Feedback/Planning meeting—Journals 251/252	10am-3pm— Library open
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	9.30-11.30am— Library Group 10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	1pm—Scottish SIG	12-3—Podcast recording	1-3pm—Library open		Library closed due to State Conference Submissions due for October newsletter State Conference via Zoom
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
State Conference via Zoom	10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	10am—English Ancestors 1pm—DNA	10am-2pm— Snippers	10am— Management Com- mittee 1-3pm—Library open	9.30am-3.30pm— Publications print- ing	10am-3pm— Library open
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	9.30-11.30am— Library Group 10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	10am—Irish Ancestors		10am— Scrapbooking 1-3pm—Library open		10am-3pm— Library open
28	29	30				
	Mayfield Heritage Walk					

Octo	ber					2025
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
Red—SIG Groups Blue—Volunteer Groups Green—Courses Purple—Meetings Black—Library Open Brown—Events			10am-2pm— Snippers	10am—Cemetery SIG 1-3pm—Library open		Library closed Labour Day long weekend
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	Labour Day long weekend	10am—Family History Finder 6-7.25pm—Library open 7.30pm—General Meeting		10am—Ancestry Users 1-3pm—Library open		10am-3pm— Library open Submissions due for November newsletter
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	9.30-11.30am— Library Group 10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	1pm—Scottish SIG	10am-2pm— Snippers	10am— Management Com- mittee 1-3pm—Library open	10am-12pm— Publications meeting 12-3pm— Publications print-	10am-3pm— Library open
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	10am—English Ancestors 1pm—DNA		10am— Scrapbooking 1-3pm—Library open		10am-3pm— Library open Articles due for Journal 252
26	27	28	29	30	31	
	9.30-11.30am— Library Group 10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	10am—Irish Ancestors		1-3pm—Library open		

November

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Red—SIG Groups Blue—Volunteer Groups Green—Courses Purple—Meetings Black—Library Open Brown—Events						1 10am-3pm— Library open
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	10am—Family History Finder 6-7.25pm—Library open 7.30pm—General Meeting	10am-2pm— Snippers	10am—Cemetery SIG 1-3pm—Library open	9.30-12.00— Editing meeting— Journal 252	10am-3pm— Library open
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	9.30-11.30am— Library Group 10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	1pm—Scottish SIG		10am—Ancestry Users 1-3pm—Library open	9.30-3.30pm— Publications printing Cover printing— Journal 252	10am-3pm— Library open Submissions due for December newsletter
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	10am—English Ancestors 1pm—DNA	10am-2pm— Snippers	10am— Management Com- mittee 1-3pm—Library open	9.30-12.00— Journal printing— Journal 252	10am-3pm— Library open
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	9.30-11.30am— Library Group 10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	10am—Irish Ancestors		10am— Scrapbooking 1-3pm—Library open	Caledonian news- letter to be emailed	10am-3pm— Library open
30						

December

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Red—SIG Groups Blue—Volunteer Groups Green—Courses Purple—Meetings Black—Library Open Brown—Events	10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	10am—Family History Finder	10am-2pm— Snippers	10am—Cemetery SIG 1-3pm—Library open	9-11—Feedback/ Planning meeting— Journals 252/253 11.30—Christmas Lunch—Poppy's Verandah Café, Gateshead	10am-3pm— Library open
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	9.30-11.30am— Library Group 10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests			1-3pm—Library open		10am-3pm— Library open
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	10.30am—Coffee and Chat, Wests	10am—English Ancestors 1pm—DNA		10am— Management Com- mittee 1-3pm—Library open		r Christmas/New break
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
		Library closed	d for Christmas	/New Year bre	ak	
28	29	30	31			
	Library closed	d for Christmas/New	Year break			